

Contemporary Zambian Art, Conceptualism and the 'Global' Art World

By

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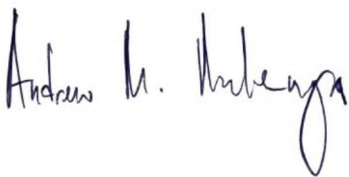
Rhodes University

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Supervisor: Professor Ruth Simbao

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by complete references. This thesis is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirement of Master of Arts (MA) in Art History at Rhodes University. I declare that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at another university.



Signature

10/03/16

Date

ABSTRACT

In Zambia, 'contemporary art' (as a category constructed by the European-dominated international art world), was introduced by the European settler community and continued within its preserve, remaining largely inaccessible to the indigenous community of Africans until Zambia's independence in 1964. This thesis traces the integration of Africans into the contemporary art community and attributes the process, in part, to a small group of artists of European descent who played a significant role in engaging with Zambians, working side by side with them, subsequently influencing their art production and implicitly shaping the ways in which 'Zambian' art 'ought to' look for decades to come. The research traces the early days of contemporary art practice in Zambia to the Lusaka Art Society and Art Centre Foundation that was founded and run by an all-settler group of formally trained artists with a particular inclination towards sculpture and painting. In the wake of the integration however, art production in the formalist manner was further proliferated by the European diplomatic community which would also go as far as dictating artistic subject matter. This thesis argues that the Eurocentric and pre-eminently formalist approach to contemporary art has cost Zambian artists an international presence. I submit that the few instances where contemporary Zambian art practice has penetrated the 'global art' scene or caught the attention of international curators is due to artists adopting more radical conceptual approaches to art production, often creating tensions with local viewers. This thesis also examines conceptualism in contemporary Zambian art practice and examines the inequalities of the 'global art' world. I argue that conceptual art, although not generally accepted on the Zambian art scene, has played a vital role in helping Zambian artists enter the global art world, albeit modestly.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	i
List of illustrations	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1:	4
CONTEMPORARY ART IN ZAMBIA: A CHRONOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK – PATRONAGE, ORGANISATIONS AND KEY INDIVIDUALS	
1.1 A short history of Zambia: The amalgamation of a nation	
1.2 Contemporary art in Northern Rhodesia: artists and influences	
1.2.1 Zambia's independence and the post-1964 art scene	
1.2.2 Henry Tayali: Zambia's first art scholar, a misunderstood visionary	
1.2.3 Exhibition of Modern Zambian Sculptural Art, and the Zambian government's short lived arts and culture patronage	
1.2.4 Anglo American's short-lived arts patronage	
1.2.5 The Art Centre Foundation, Bert Witkamp and the Evelyn Hone College workshops	
1.2.6 Mpapa Gallery, the first privately owned and commercial gallery and the unique role of Ruth Hartley	
1.2.7 The end of the Art Centre Foundation and the formation of the Lechwe Art Trust	
CHAPTER 2:	46
'GLOBAL' CONCEPTUAL ART AND THE ZAMBIAN IMPULSE	
2.1 A general understanding of conceptual art: backgrounds and definitions	
2.2 Conceptualism in contemporary African art: a brief mapping and understanding	
2.3 The Martin Phiri revolution and the rise of conceptualism in Zambia	

- 2.4 Conceptualism in Zambia after Phiri's *Caskets*
- 2.5 Contemporary Zambian artists' understanding of conceptualism: a general survey.

CHAPTER 3: 95

“GLOBAL ART” AND ZAMBIA’S POSITION IN THE RISE OF NEW ART WORLDS

- 3.1 ‘Contemporary art’, a re-examination
- 3.2 Tensions between “contemporary art” and “global contemporary art”
- 3.3 “Global art”: murky waters disguised in lofty conjectural rhetoric?
- 3.4 Where does Zambia lie on the international art map?

CONCLUSION 119

APPENDIX 123

BIBLIOGRAPHY 126

ILLUSTRATIONS 131

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. Thomas Baines, *The Falls from the West* (1862), oil on canvas, National Archives of Zimbabwe. (published in Carruthers and Arnold, (1995). (6/10/15).

Fig. 2. Emil Holub, *Matoka Chief Saka Sipu* (undated), illustration, (published in Ellison, G., *Art in Zambia* (2004). (6/10/15).

Fig. 3. A. Cree, DB Willson *Rhodesia Regiment* (undated), illustrations, (published in Ellison, G. *Art in Zambia* (2004). (6/10/15).

Fig. 4. Henry Tayali *Destiny* (1960–1965), oil on canvas. (published in Lechwe Trust Catalogue (2009). (6/10/15).

Fig. 5. An undated photograph showing Henry Tayali sketching a live scene from a crafts market in Lusaka. (Reproduction from Visual Arts Council of Zambia documentation centre, Lusaka). (6/10/15).

Fig. 6. Catalogue cover from the 1966 exhibition held at Evelyn Hone College in Lusaka. (Reproduction taken from catalogue cover. 6/10/15).

Fig. 7. Rainford Sililo, *wood carving*, undated. (published in Ellison, G. *Art in Zambia* 2004). (6/10/15).

Fig. 8. Catalogue cover from the 1966 exhibition held at the Adler Fielding Gallery in Johannesburg. (Reproduction taken from catalogue cover. 6/10/15)

Fig. 9. A Johannesburg model, Colleen Andrews, studies some of the many Zambian sculptures which have been flown to Johannesburg for exhibition at the Adler Fielding Gallery (published in *Sunday Times*, South Africa issue dated 23/10/66.)

Fig. 10. Ruth Bush Hartley Chikumbi Bombings, (1979), oil on canvas, 102cm x76cm, National Collection, Lusaka (Reproduction from Lusaka National Museum, Zambia).

Fig. 11. R. Mutt, *Fountain*, (1917), Photograph by Alfred. (Reproduction taken from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcel_Duchamp#/media/File:Duchamp_Fontaine.jpg.

Accessed: 02/10/15

Fig. 12. Gavin Turk, *Cavey*, (1991 – 1997), Ceramic. (Reproduction taken from <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turk-cavey-t13208>. Accessed: 02/10/15)

Fig. 13. Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs* (1965). (published in Godfrey, T. 1998. Conceptual Art. Phaidon Press Limited Accessed: 02/10/15)

Fig. 14. Martin Phiri, *Casket II* (1995 – 1996) on display at the Henry Tayali Gallery in Lusaka, Zambia (Reproduction supplied by William B. Miko, 2015)

Fig. 15. Martin Phiri, detail of *Casket II* (1995 – 1996) by Martin Phiri (Reproduction supplied by William B. Miko, 2015)

Fig. 16. Martin Phiri, earlier works, *Nude Study I* (1980s) and *Nude Study 2*, charcoal on paper (Reproduction taken from Lechwe Trust Collection catalogue. 02/10/15)

Fig. 17. Martin Phiri, *Tukababwino Kuntanshi*, (1990s) grey marble, and *Accordion Player* (1990s), scrap metal, (published in *Lechwe Trust Collection catalogue*. 02/10/15)

Fig. 18. Anawana Haloba, from an untitled performance (2002). (Reproduction by Ruth Simbao published in *Art South Africa*, Autumn, 2007. 05/10/15)

Fig. 19. (left) Anawana Haloba, from Street intervention in Lusaka, Zambia. (Reproduction by Ruth Kerkham Simbao taken from *Art South Africa*, Autumn, 2007. 05/10/15)

Fig. 20. Kalinosi Mutale, *Lucifer*, 2004, mixed media. (Photo: Ruth Kerkham. published in *Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art*, Autumn 2007 Edition. 05/10/15)

Fig. 21. (left) Norman O’Flynn and Lutanda Mwamba, from an untitled performance (2003). (published in *Insaka International Artists Workshop 2003 catalogue*. 02/10/15)

Fig. 22. Norman O’Flynn and Lutanda Mwamba, from *Body paint performance* (2003). (published in *Insaka International Artists Workshop 2003 catalogue*. 02/10/15)

Fig. 23. Norman O’Flynn and Lutanda Mwamba, from *Body paint performance* (2003) (published in *Insaka International Artists Workshop 2003 catalogue*. 02/10/15)

Fig. 24. Zenzele Chulu and Lutanda Mwamba, from *Nyami Lunch* (2003), performance. (published in *Insaka International Artists Workshop 2003 catalogue*. 02/10/15)

Fig. 25. Zenzele Chulu, from *Cross Border* (2003). (published in *Insaka International Artists Workshop 2003 catalogue*. 02/10/15)

Fig. 26. Sylvia Mwando, from *Initiation Performance* (2003). (published in *Insaka International Artists Workshop 2003 catalogue*. 02/10/15)

Fig. 27. David Chirwa, (from left to right) *Struggling Performance*, (1997), horn and marble, *Recurring Dream*, (1995) stone and wood, *Fertility Concept*, (1994) horn and marble (Taken published in *Transitions Exhibition Catalogue*. 03/10/15)

Fig. 28. David Chirwa, *Third World Illusion*, detail, (2004) installation, mixed media (published in *Transitions Exhibition Catalogue*. 03/10/15)

Fig. 29. David Chirwa, *Third World Illusion*, detail, (2004) Installation, mixed media (published in *Transitions Exhibition Catalogue*. 03/10/15)

Fig. 30. Baba Jakeh Chande, *Torso*, and *Endangered Species* (Reproduction taken from photograph by Alice Cunningham). 03/10/15)

Fig. 31. Baba Jakeh Chande, from *Celebration*, (Reproduction taken from <http://www.keketop.com/chande/>. 03/10/15)

Fig. 32. Baba Jakeh Chande, *Awaiting Revelation* – performance in mutton cloth. (Reproduction taken from photograph, Zambia Visual Arts Council archives. January 2015)

Fig. 33. Baba Jakeh Chande, in a performance. Reproduction taken from <http://africasacountry.com/2011/05/finlands-africa/>

Fig. 34. Baba Jakeh Chande, in a performance. (Reproduction taken 03/10/15 from <http://www.palsfestival.se/fake-finns-and-wannabe-swedes/artists>

Fig. 35. Victor Mutelekesha, (2000) from performance in Chipata, Zambia. (Reproduction made available by William Miko, 5/10 /15)

Fig. 36. Victor Mutelekesha, *Dagali Meltdown*, (2008) mixed media installation, sound, video, photographs. (published in *Weekend Post*, Friday January 11 2008. 06/10/15)

Fig. 37. Victor Mutelekesha, *Dagali Meltdown*, 2008 mixed media installation, sound, video, photographs. (published in *Weekend Post*, Friday January 11 2008. 06/10/15)

Fig. 38. Kate Naluyele, *Simple Living*, painting on canvas (1999), 57x74. (published in *Zambian Female Artists' Exhibition in Norway 1999* exhibition catalogue. 05/10/15)

Fig. 39. Kate Naluyele, *Defeatism*, (2007) mixed media installation. (published in *Weekend Post*, Friday August 10 2007. 05/10/15)

Fig. 40. Chanda Mwenya, *Viewer Discretion*, (2007) installation with ready-mades. (published in *Weekend Post*, Friday January 2 2008. 05/10/15)

Fig. 41. Danny Chiliapa Lwando, *Mr Speaker*, (2015) mixed media installation, found objects. (published in *Saturday Post*, Saturday May 30 2015. 06/10/15).

Fig. 42. Mutale Kalinosi and Joseph Shakulipa, *Ship on The Mediterranean*, 2015 mixed media installation. (published in *Saturday Post*, Saturday May 30 2015. 06/10/15).

Fig. 43. Sary Mwaba, *Thinking Boxes*, (2014), acrylic on canvas (Courtesy of the artist)

Fig. 44. Sary Mwaba, *The Tree and Shepherd*, (2014), acrylic on canvas (Courtesy of the artist 01/18/16)

Fig. 45. Sary Mwaba *DKALO-15*, 2014, mixed media 235 x 120 x 120 cm (published in Sary Mwaba – Life on Mars 2015. 19/01/16)

Fig. 46. Sary Mwaba, *Copper, Cobalt and Manganese Cabbage*, 2014, Chinese Cabbage and food colour installation (published in Sary Mwaba – Life on Mars 2015. 19/01/16)

INTRODUCTION

This research is rooted in the field of Art History and focuses on the contemporary visual arts in Zambia from independence to the present. A key purpose of this research is to address the gap in scholarly literature on contemporary art in Zambia. Until recently, Zambia has frequently been ignored by scholars of Art History and Visual Culture, consequently being omitted from important arts publications that have focused on neighbouring countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Tanzania (Simbao 2008a).

While the current Western-driven discourse of contemporary African art favours discussions on 'global art' (Belting et al 2013), I argue that this research is imperative as no scholarly history of contemporary Zambian art exists. In this thesis, I contribute to the development of a history of contemporary art in Zambia from the 1960s, when painting and sculpture were the focus, to the present, when Zambian artists are to some degree embracing the framework of Conceptual Art (Goldie and Schellekens 2010; Corris 2004). As I document this history, I analyse the role and reception of foreign patronage in Zambia since independence in 1964. An important aspect of my research is to contribute to the filling of the gaps in this discipline and to challenge certain perspectives that exist. In doing so, I exert my own agency as a Zambian historian of art and visual culture as I create a revisionist project that can continue to be augmented in the future by myself and other like-minded scholars.

In her book *Contemporary African Art*, Sidney Littlefield Kasfir (1999a: 65) argues that "The emergence of new African art onto the world stage, beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, seems in retrospect to have been a major act of cultural brokerage by a small number of mainly European supporters". In Zambia, I propose that Gabriel Ellison, Bente Lorenze, Bert Witkamp, Joan Jenkin, Ruth Hartley and Cynthia Zukas played the prominent roles of European (or settler) supporters and patrons of the visual arts. I examine the role of these art patrons, analysing their influence and reception in Zambia because I argue that while European patrons, to a certain extent, performed an important role in developing the contemporary art scene in Zambia from the late 1950s to the early 1990s, it is critical to acknowledge and analyse the ways in which they also subjugated indigenous creative expression and dominated the art scene in less favourable ways by shaping, as surrogate citizens, what they thought 'African art'

or indeed 'Zambian art' ought to look like. As such, local Zambians were not given enough room to assert their own agency in terms of their own knowledge production as artists. My analyses stem from research interviews gathered through voice recording and e-mails.

According to international curators and scholars Salah M. Hassan and Olu Oguibe (2001), Conceptual Art is associated with self-reflexivity “by which the work of art is turned on itself and ultimately on the notion of art”. They observe that it is an art form that “emerged in the last century from a long series of often unconnected and not altogether intentional acts in which artists elected and rejected certain forms or strategies in art making” (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 10).

In Zambia, this form of creative expression emerged in the mid- 1990s and, albeit relatively scarce, was most visible between 2003 and 2008. The few times it has been exhibited in the form of installations or performance pieces it has not been well received. As a precursor to this period, Martin Phiri, who is a key player in the development of conceptual art in Zambia, showed in a local gallery when he returned from studies in China in the early 1990s. The controversial work featured a sculpture of his likeness in a coffin, which was accompanied by sound, videos and images of women mourning. Fatefully, he died shortly after, and the work was considered by many a bad omen. Although, following this, the Zambian artist David Chirwa suggested that conceptualism was the way forward (Henderson 2005), ten years down the line it is still not a broadly-accepted mode of production in contemporary Zambia.

Exhibitions by artists Anawana Haloba, Mutale Kalinosi and Victor Mutelekesha have similarly ignited contrasting views. In my research I explore not only the struggle that these artists in the Zambian diaspora face, but even those that are still in Zambia. In the last chapter I use Stary Mwaba as a case study in this continued struggle. In doing so I interrogate ‘global art’s’ inability to engage sufficiently with local art scenes in Africa. I argue that it’s important to stress the value of looking at local contexts in the broader framework of 'global art' and that 'global art' needs to keep a dialogical relationship between 'global' and 'local'. I problematize ways in which the 'north' has the privilege to claim its 'global status' by claiming that everyone should acknowledge how 'global' the art world is, and argue that, in effect, this discourse erases the importance of local contexts (Simbao 2015), such as in Zambia.

An important aspect of my research has been the collection of primary data. I have conducted interviews with the key patrons and mediators of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s: Joan Jenkin, Ruth Hartley, Cynthia Zukas, Bert Witkamp and William Miko. In collaboration with Professor Simbao, I also interviewed over seventy contemporary artists in Lusaka and Livingstone. Further, I have conducted an in-depth textual analysis on the framing of 'Global Art' by analysing the writing of Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel (2013) in the book *The global contemporary and the rise of new art worlds*, as well as writing on contemporary African art and conceptualism by authors such as Enwezor (1999), Hassan and Oguibe (2001), Richards (2002) and Simbao (2008; 2007). During my studies at Rhodes University I have returned to Zambia a couple of times and have conducted archival research at the Visual Arts Council (VAC) in Lusaka. I analyse all of the above works specifically in relation to contemporary Zambian art, which I have followed in detail since I began working as an arts journalist in Zambia in 2003.

This emphasis on the collection of primary material and on drawing from my own long-term engagement with artists, collectors, galleries and museums for 13 years as a journalist is critical to my argument that emphasises the need for local artists and writers to assert their agency at this critical point of writing and (re)writing locally specific histories of art. I view this thesis as the beginning of a process that needs to continue in collaboration with other scholars and artists both within and beyond Zambia.

CHAPTER 1: CONTEMPORARY ART IN ZAMBIA: A CHRONOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK – PATRONAGE, ORGANISATIONS AND KEY INDIVIDUALS

In her book *Contemporary African Art*, Sidney Littlefield Kasfir (1999a: 65) argues that “The emergence of new African art onto the world stage, beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, seems in retrospect to have been a major act of cultural brokerage by a small number of mainly European supporters”. In this chapter I analyse this perspective with regards to the “introduction” and proliferation of contemporary art in Zambia over the last 50 years. The chapter examines the roles played by Bente Lorenz, Bert Witkamp, Joan (Piltcher) Jenkin, Ruth Hartley and Cynthia Zukas – artists, supporters and patrons of the visual arts – by briefly exploring the institutions that these individuals established and ran in the context of becoming the foundation on which contemporary Zambian art was established. While European patrons, admittedly, played an important role in the contemporary art scene in Zambia in the 1950s to 1980s, I argue that they also dominated the scene in unhealthy ways by shaping, from the outside, what they thought 'African art' or 'Zambian art' ought to look like.

Further, I evaluate how these institutions have informed art production, alongside a lack of Zambian academic art institutions over the years. As such, local Zambians were not given enough room to assert their own agency in terms of their own knowledge production as artists. I argue that the lack of local agency remains a critical issue and part of my goal in this is to fill in the gaps in terms of recording this history is to exert my own agency as a Zambian in recording and analysing the history of contemporary Zambian art. As such, I argue that my research is part of a revisionist project. Further, this chapter examines the short-lived government patronage of the visual arts as well as Henry Tayali’s unsuccessful efforts to introduce art at university degree level. (In this context Tayali is examined as a scholar rather than a painter and sculptor¹). I partially examine Tayali’s role stimulated by the words of Senegalese curator N’Gone Fall. Fall (2003:10) writes:

Henry Tayali is considered as one of Zambia’s talented pioneer artists. What is his legacy to the Zambian art scene? Do people know about the Makerere art school in

¹ See Mumba, P. 2015. *Abstract art and the contested ground of African modernism* and Setti, G. 2000. *An analysis of the contribution of four painters to the development of contemporary Zambian painting from 1950 to 1997*.

Uganda where Tayali studied? Are they able to project him into African art history and movements of the twentieth century?

I also evoke Tayali in this research as a response to Fall's above stated questions as I make a modest contribution "to project him into African art history". I do so taking the responsibility of sharing a local narrative as a Zambian art historian because I feel my own agency is critical, as I reject the notion that international curators and writers can, alone, dominate the recording of African art history.

According to the definition in the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Art Terms*, "contemporary art" is "A term loosely used to describe art that is of the moment or the very recent past, in distinction to modern art, which is a more all-embracing term and can be used to cover many of the Avant-garde movements of the 20th century as well as art that is contemporary" (Clarke and Clarke 2001). Kasfir (1999a: 9) uses the term to frame art on the African continent from the "mid-1950s" as "this was when political independence was gained, when colonialism was cast off and when the enormous intellectual and creative euphoria which this engendered emerged".

1.1 A short history of Zambia: The amalgamation of a nation

Since the greater part of this thesis focuses on contemporary art in Zambia, from the country's early days until the present, it would be prudent to briefly contextualise the nation's geographical location, formation, ethnic composition and independence. However, seeing as the thesis focuses specifically on visual arts, following an initial introduction I will narrow down the country's background to particular areas relevant to the field of study, borrowing from the advice of Roberts (1976: xi), who points out that "The historian of Zambia must constantly adjust his [sic] perspective to fit the actual spheres of human activity which he [sic] is studying, whether these are kingdoms, religious cults, trading networks or language groups."

The landlocked country of Zambia became a British protectorate in the 19th century.

It was not until the very end of the nineteenth century that this territory became a single political unit, the British colony of Northern Rhodesia. Its frontiers, like so many colonial frontiers, bore little relation to previous political, economic or social divisions. The colony comprised a variety of political and cultural groups, whose histories had

linked them to peoples outside the new frontiers as well as within them (Roberts 1976: xi).

As a geographical unit, Zambia was essentially created during the European Partition of Africa. Roberts (1976) points out, however, that the British initially got a foothold through Christian missionaries such as Dr David Livingstone (I will discuss his role in the visual arts later as I look at the artists he travelled with on his expeditions) followed by businessmen like John Cecil Rhodes, who would later lend his name to the territory. “Rhodes came out of England to improve his health, but did much more. He and his partners in de Beers dominated the diamond industry” (Roberts 1976: 156). Rhodes moved to the new diamond fields at Kimberley and, by 1890, when he was only twenty-seven, through a series of treaties the country became part the Northern territories of the British South Africa Company, in a clear attempt to gain access to the riches of the Congo (Roberts 1976: 162). “It is the copper of the Katanga which had excited Rhodes’ interest, and by the end of 1890 it was clear that Katanga had been lost to Leopold of Belgium.” The failure by the British to move forward required them to start prospecting the whole area south of Katanga. Roberts (1976: 163) writes, “At the end of 1895 the British South Africa Company resumed responsibility for administering its northern territories, which from 1897 were officially called Northern Rhodesia”.

Once the British South Africa Company gained full control of Northern Rhodesia, it did very little with it. “Compared to Southern Rhodesia” – present day Zimbabwe – “its economic prospects seemed dim” (Roberts 1976: 175). This was despite the fact that the company was the sole owner of mineral rights. Northern Rhodesia also served as “a labour source” for the mines in Southern Rhodesia as well as South Africa, and “there was only a limited demand for African labour within the territory” (reference). The British South Africa Company needed to manage the activities of this newly-acquired territory and so they started bringing in European staff to manage affairs. This would be in turn the beginning of the influx of “white settlers”. Roberts (1976: 179) writes:

To enforce its authority in Northern Rhodesia, the British South African Company relied upon a small body of white civil servants. These were at first recruited from Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, though later on preference was given to university graduates from Britain.

Roberts indicates that at this stage traditional leaders had been reduced to “little more than policemen” and that they were even “denied proper wages”. He writes,

But the very fact that Company power was so thinly spread, meant that local officials often resorted to extreme violence in order to assert their authority. Hut-burning and summary flogging were commonly employed to enforce obedience to demand for tax and labour (Roberts 1976: 179).

The British South Africa Company ruled from 1899 to 1924, when it subsequently handed over to the British government. The company could no longer handle the expenses as it was becoming costly to defend the country against troops from German East Africa (Roberts 1976: 182). The transfer of Northern Rhodesia to the Colonial Office did not in itself cause any sudden change of direction in the country's affairs: in the short run, at least, it did little or nothing to diminish the influence of southern Africa upon Northern Rhodesia. In the meantime, the 1920s became a period of important economic development in the region mainly due to "the discovery of vast deposits of copper . . . The expansion of electrical and automobile industries during and after the First World War had greatly increased the world demand for copper" (Roberts 1976: 185). It is from this point that mining would become the country's mainstay. "By 1930 four large new mines were being developed on the Copperbelt. Nkana and Nchanga were owned by the Rhodesian branch of the Anglo American Corporation, the colossus of South African mining finance". Through a few individuals, this company, as I shall point out, became a key supporter of the visual arts in post-independence Zambia. Nevertheless, through the 1930s and 1940s Northern Rhodesia continued to serve as a key source of base minerals.

During the Second World War the Allies made heavy demands on the Copperbelt mines, and by 1945 Northern Rhodesia was firmly established as one of the world's major copper producers, contributing about one-eighth of the non-communist world's total product' (Roberts 1976: 186).

However, even amidst this prosperity in favour of the colonialists, "the political destiny of Northern Rhodesia was far from clear". By the 1940s the Europeans felt they should be more associated with the "white settler regime in Southern Rhodesia. In 1953 both Rhodesias were joined with Nyasaland in a Central African Federation and this clearly aligned Northern Rhodesia closer to white southern Africa" (Roberts 1976: 186). According to Roberts, these attitudes and actions from the Europeans were paradoxical, because they would in turn stir up the African liberation movements that had already shown festering signs in the North East of the country some two decades previously.

Soon after these developments, Africans would gain independence with Kenneth Kaunda as their leader. Andrew Sardanis, a Greek Cypriot who settled in Northern Rhodesia in 1950, gives an account of the event: “The Union Jack came down at 11:56 p.m. on 23 October, and the Zambian flag was hoisted at 00:01 a.m. on 24 October, 1964. Zambia was born. Northern Rhodesia was no more” (Sardanis 2014: 11). Sardanis, a young revolutionary himself at the time, indicates that he could not believe that 14 years after his arrival “Northern Rhodesia would give way to a New African country named Zambia” (Sardanis 2014: 12). This was due to the disparities and segregation he found at the time: from housing to education, which he aptly summarises, providing an overview of the situation as a clear offshoot of apartheid. According to Sardanis (2014: 13):

There was complete separation of the races. The towns were divided into European areas, African areas and Indian areas; they had separate housing, shopping, schools, churches, clubs, sports teams, playing fields and all other social activities. . . Education was geared entirely for the benefit of whites: first class school buildings, separate for kindergarten, elementary and secondary, small classes, plenty of teachers. For Africans who outnumbered the whites 50:1, elementary schools ended at standard VI (grade 7) and existed only in urban areas. In rural areas schools ended at standard IV or standard II (grades 5 or 2) depending on the remoteness.

These imbalances as will be seen, were not unique to housing and education, the art scene was also predominantly segregated as will be indicated in the following sections.

1.2 Contemporary art in Northern Rhodesia: artists and influences

The Zambian painter Godfrey Setti (2000) stresses that “The history of westernised Zambian painting starts from about the middle of the 20th Century, with the arrival of Europeans, who formed the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland”. Gabriel Ellison, a veteran Zambian artist and author, herself a descendant of these Europeans, also acknowledges this theory, and goes as far as providing more elaborate detail along with names of individual artists, which sheds light on the structures of patronage, as well as influences on content and narrative of the art. Ellison (2004: 12) explains:

Generally speaking, the production of paintings and drawings in the 1920s and 1930s were European activities. Africans dominated the sculptural aspects of art and craft where the necessary materials were readily available. It is from this time that the term “Contemporary Art” becomes applicable in the present context

Ellison points out that in the colonial era it is the explorer/artists that first practised any semblance of painting in the “westernised” sense, citing the Englishman Thomas Baines as being a pioneer in this regard. She writes:

While Northern Rhodesia had no artists of the calibre of Thomas Baines, an early explorer/artist who painted many scenes of the Victoria Falls in the late nineteenth century, there were European artists who left recordings of the country (Ellison 2004: 12).

Baines’ expeditions, and the essence and nature of his work, including along the Zambezi River in present day Zambia, are well documented by Jane Carruthers and Marion Arnold. Carruthers and Arnold (1995: 48) elaborate:

. . . in 1858 the Royal Geographic Society appointed him to accompany David Livingstone, the great Victorian missionary-explorer, on an assignment to that most significant central African River the Zambezi.

By the time Baines visited the Zambezi, he had already carved a name for himself, enjoying several commissions in South Africa along the Cape. Not only had he painted settlements along the coast, but he had also gone as far inland as Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, arriving there in 1848.² (Carruthers and Arnold 1995: 138). Giving an insight into the attitudes and influences on art practice among early settlers, Terry Smith (2011: 214) writes:

In South Africa, for example, professional artists among early foreign settlers and subsequent generations adapted European styles and attitudes to the depiction of local scenery, unfamiliar light effects, and expansive spaces, generating imagery that underwrote the creation of a colonial narrative for British and then a national one for the Dutch Afrikaners. Like the majority of artists in other settler colonies around the world, they ignored or disdained the visual cultures of indigenous peoples around them.

I contend that the artistic attitude of Baines (Figure 1) and later explorer artists, with regards subject matter, material and technique, that would often result in sentimental and picturesque imagery, these unfortunate results of European dominance during the colonial period would

² See Carruthers and Arnold (1995: 138)

stay with the production of art in Zambia for a century and beyond, as will be pointed out later on. Concerning what guided his artistic production while on the Zambezi expedition, Carruthers and Arnold (1995: 50) disclose that:

Baines's instructions, drafted by Livingstone in April 1858, were detailed and clear. As the artist, he was to give 'faithful representations of the general features of wild animals and birds . . . delineate for the general collection . . . useful and rare plants, fossils and reptiles . . . draw average specimens of the different tribes.

Approximately forty years after Baines, the Czech explorer Emil Holub also visited the area now called Zambia and, according to Ellison (2004: 13), he came within a few miles of the present day capital Lusaka in 1898, where he "sketched the *Ila* people, their houses and artefacts as did other early missionaries and explorers They were not artists in the strictest sense". Ellison (2004:13) submits that they "provided invaluable data and detail of the local people and natural history" (Figure 2). Ellison (2004: 13) also cites two painters as outstanding before 1939, D. B. Wilson, and Angus Cree,

. . . both of whom were in the regiment and specialized in beautifully detailed and accurate watercolour illustrations Their paintings were in the Old Police Museum situated in Cairo Road which was later demolished to make way for new buildings. The collection is no longer available for public viewing.

Relating to artistic nuances of "settler artists" on the African continent during this period, Smith (2011: 214) points out that "already in a state of provincial dependence in relation to the art of their home countries, they were prevented from fully embracing innovatory modernism". According to Ellison (2004: 14), it is only at the beginning of World War II that Northern Rhodesia received its first professionally-trained artists, who came in as refugees or fugitives from the war. She identifies Max Piron as "one of the first professional artists to arrive in the country". Ellison (2004: 14) states that:

Trained as an artist in Germany, he had escaped from Hitler's persecution of Jewish people and arrived in Lusaka in about 1940. The town was full of refugees from the war in Europe, both Jewish and non-Jewish and Max Piron rented a room in the now defunct VV Hotel in Cairo Road.

Ellison indicates that Cairo Road, the main boulevard in the Lusaka City Centre, was once a hive of creative activity, although this is not the case today. Ellison writes that Piron joined a department in the colonial government as a building inspector, “as art presented an uncertain economic future” (Ellison 2004: 14). She adds that he took to painting portraits of “local dignitaries and their wives, landscapes and African studies although samples of his work are not available in public displays”. Ellison (2004: 14) states:

One of his early commissions was to paint the portrait of Sam Fischer, an important and influential figure in Lusaka. A few other commissions followed and the artist became a familiar figure in town, sketching when he could and spending his leisure time in the studio. He worked in oils and also made skilful black and white pen and ink drawings and later, etchings.

From Ellison’s remarks, it is clear that Piron was practising what is considered the “western tradition” of art-making informed by academic training, which appears to back her assertion that Piron was indeed “one of the first professional artists to arrive” in the country, with regards to one who is practising within the margins of the western canon. Ellison (2004: 14) indicates that Piron’s paintings were in a sense innocuous, void of any deeper meaning or interpretation, but it was the “skilful black and white” pen drawings he used to apply a more layered meaning to, although she does not seem to elaborate the “depth of meaning” in detail. According to Ellison (2004: 14):

In the black and white drawings, he put a deeper meaning into his work. For example, what appeared to be a lit candle still life revealed, on closer inspection, that the drips of wax were figures reaching upwards to the light. There was always an extra dimension to the drawings and etchings, but the commissioned oils did not show this anguish.

Ellison further attributes the first art training to be conducted in Lusaka to Piron; while the “settler” and “African” student composition of the “school” is not clear, it should be noted that Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), unlike her Northern neighbour, The Belgian Congo (Zaire) and her Southern neighbour Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), did not have any formal art schools or workshops organised for the indigenous people by the settler community. Jean-Hubert Martin (2005: 30) points out that “The 1940s and 50s witnessed the emergence of schools of painting

in Africa that experienced real success internationally, some as a result of European involvement” (Martin 2005: 30). He also indicates that these schools had quickly begun establishing their own new artistic vocabulary, to the North of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). For instance:

. . . the Lubumbashi school in the Congo, founded in 1953 by Belgian artist Pierre Romain Desfosses, turned out animal paintings in dull hues and agricultural scenes treated as decorative tracery, which quickly evolved into a stereotyped output for foreign customers . . . while occasionally paintings revealed some pictorial qualities, all of them were made laden by imagery that was servilely adapted to the demands of a European clientele (Martin 2005: 30).

To Zambia’s immediate South, in the mid-1950s,

. . . Frank McEwen, a British art administrator and then director of the National Gallery of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), met Thomas Mukarobgwa, who taught him about the Shona tribe [sic], their religion, dance and music. Inspired by what he heard, McEwen gave Mukarobgwa and other young artists painting materials, encouraged the artists to draw from their Shona backgrounds and introduced them to sculptures by Picasso, Henry Moore and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. This led to one of the most productive workshops anywhere in Africa that is still regularly visited today (Martin 2005: 30).

McEwen’s effort was not the only one as there were also spaces such as Mzilikazi Art Centre (that mainly targeted the youth), as will be seen later in the chapter. In addition, Martin points out that West Africa also had well-established “schools with European connections” that were “progressive, at least for the age” (Martin 2005: 30); this was in obvious reference to the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Martin adds that “in 1962, Ulli Bier helped to establish workshops in Oshogbo, Nigeria” (although the catalogue *Transatlantic Dialogue: Contemporary Art in and Out of Africa* indicates that “Onabolu and the British teacher Kenneth Murray instituted a program of art education in Nigeria in the 1930’s”) (Harris 2000: 21). It should be noted also that, according to Harris, “The first African school of art was established in Khartoum, Sudan in 1946” (Harris 2000: 21). While the aforementioned art schools indicate a formal structure as well as the integration of African students vis-à-vis the “colonised”, there is an indication that Piron’s classes were to a large extent informal, since he was also an inspector of construction sites. However, it could be possible that some of his

students may have stemmed from the working; those that may have come in from the “rural” areas to find work in urban areas. According to Ellison:

During his time in Lusaka he gave lessons in art, and if, during his work as a building inspector, he found any would be artists he took the time and trouble to encourage and help them. After the war ended he left this country and became a well-known artist in Barcelona (Ellison 2004: 14).

This personal commitment from Piron may be likened to that of McEwen across the border; he too may have also faced the challenges encountered by the latter. As Elizabeth Morton³ points out, McEwen’s

. . . promotion of art was always hampered and shaped by the many institutional liabilities that he faced. His major audience, the white Rhodesian bourgeoisie, was extremely racist and in no way predisposed to supporting modern black art. This audience which McEwen publicly avowed as ‘old women of both sexes’, responded by getting white politicians to cut back the national Gallery’s budget in the mid-1960s as soon as McEwen’s new artists began supplanting the watercolour landscapes that Rhodesians favoured (Morton 2013: 274).

Nevertheless, even after the departure of Piron, there was still artistic activity within Northern Rhodesia’s (Zambia’s) settler community as well as a continued influx of European immigrants. Ellison (2004: 14) indicates that “Some Italian prisoners of war who reached Lusaka were artists. Their work found its way into homes and in public buildings, but there appears to be no record of individual artists’ names”. Ellison adds that “Their European influence was a contribution to the art scene, expanding limited horizons and introducing new ideas”. Whereas Ellison does not specify how this “European influence” helped in “expanding limited horizons and introducing new ideas”, she indicates that “Art was a subject eventually taught rather cursorily at both African and the European government’s schools”. Ellison goes on further to stress:

As is often the case with school art, most lessons fell on deaf ears and it was generally considered an “unimportant” subject. Ernest Knight, an English artist who came to live in Lusaka in the late 1940s introduced art lessons as therapy at the African Hospital with some excellent results. He took the best pieces to exhibit in Britain when he left. This was probably the first “Northern Rhodesian” display overseas. And it excited

³ “Frank McEwen and Joram Mariga: Patron and Artist in the Rhodesian Workshop School Setting, Zimbabwe”, published in Till, F. and Kasfir S. L. (2013). *African Art and Agency in the Workshop*

interest when it toured in Britain. There is no record whether the therapy classmates went on with their art. (Ellison 2004: 14)

Highlighting the genesis of and giving context to the awkward art education system that still prevails in the southern African region, the art historian John Picton points out a deliberate marginalisation of African artists by colonial powers. Focusing on “The region covered by Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Zambia”, which for a while became known “as the frontline states, for the manner in which they comprised a buffer zone between apartheid South Africa and the rest of the continent in the era of colonial rule”, Picton (2005: 7) writes that “the colonial governments were the compliant partners of South Africa, each with its own version of apartheid”. Picton (2005: 7) asserts:

One cannot now ignore that history, especially when colonial educational systems informed by apartheid deemed art not a fit subject for black African people. So it was hardly surprising that almost 50 years later Ulli Beier should write: “Frank McEwen, trying to create new artists in the cultural desert of Rhodesia, could be compared to an Israeli farmer fertilizing the Negev” (1968, 89). This was after all the conventional ‘western’ view of the visual arts of the region that seemed to be without either the sculptural traditions of the west and central Africa or the incipient modernisms of the west, east and South Africa. Nothing, however, is quite as simple as it seems, especially when and where art is concerned.

Nevertheless, in Zambia the African Hospital “art class” is arguably the closest example of organised art education or training since that conducted by Piron (Ellison 2004) a few years earlier. Ellison (2004) also identifies Richard Gregory, a schoolmaster in the Copperbelt Province, who “encouraged young artists, and exhibited his own work”. She describes his paintings as “mainly thickly painted oils of local scenes of people, or people on landscapes”. Ellison (2004: 15) further describes Gregory as being “arguably the best-known and most popular artist of the late forties and fifties”. Despite these apparent efforts at organised, or perhaps racially integrated, art education, categorically there was no formal art training conducted in Northern Rhodesia until the late 1950s. Roy Kausa, a Zambian art writer and critic who has written extensively for numerous publications over a 30-year period stresses this:

The first college offering a certificate in art in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) was established at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation Centre in 1959. This was a six months’

course tailored to teach art students how to illustrate certain portions of the Bible in order for Africans who could not read to understand the word of God.

In 1962 the art curriculum was revised and with the help of Georgia University in the United States of America saw the establishment of the African Literature Centre (ALC) at Mindolo which offered a one-year Diploma course in art and journalism open to all Pan African countries. The ALC was a fee-paying college and due to financial constraints it closed in 1992 (Kausa 2009: 3).

Whereas the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation Centre was offering a certificate course that integrated Africans as early as 1959, the first formal art classes in Northern Rhodesia may be attributed to the Lusaka Art Society (LAS). LAS was also the first semblance of an organised art body. According to Ellison (2004: 15), in 1947 a group of architects “came together and formed the Lusaka Art Society”. The collective held an exhibition, which is likely to have been the very first formal art exhibition in Northern Rhodesia, at a venue called Buffalo Hall “. . . and the public bought a few pictures” (Ellison 2004: 15). The exhibition is described by Ellison as a “success”, which would subsequently develop into an annual event that took place at the Ridgeway Hotel in Lusaka, one of the top hotels in the city at the time. According to Ellison (2004), these events grew in size annually and at some point entries would come from as far as Southern Rhodesia. Concerning the art classes, she points out that it was a Dutchman, Nick Struyf, who came to Lusaka after World War II, “who decided that life classes would improve the skills of the member artists” (Ellison 2004: 15); she further describes Struyf as an expert sign-writer who occasionally “exhibiting his beautiful tonal pastel nudes”.

Ellison also identifies Ronnie Rutherford, Peter Lawson and a farmer only identified as van Wyk as other influential members of LAS. Unlike Piron, the pre-LAS artist who had “always added an extra dimension to his drawing and etchings” (Ellison 2004: 14), these artists appeared to have adhered to picturesque, snapshot depictions of their surroundings; these appear to be sensibilities and approaches in line with Smith’s earlier mentioned observation, where he indicated that “artists among early foreign settlers and subsequent generations adapted European styles and attitudes to the depiction of local scenery” (Smith 2011: 214). According to Ellison (2004: 15):

Van Wyk, painted evocative landscapes He was particularly adept at depicting the hazy, smoky bush during the hot season, the trees and the bushes dissolving into a

wonderful blend of greys and blues. Using a palette knife and with a range of subtle blues he produced a series of bush scenes.

Concerning Lawson, Ellison writes that he was an architect, “But he was also an excellent watercolourist and an active member of the Art Society. Today he is remembered for the cenotaph outside the Cabinet Office on Independence Avenue”. According to Ellison, LAS’s exhibitions became so successful that “A number of Southern Rhodesian artists sent their work to the annual exhibition”. There is an indication, however, that artists’ work that was coming in from Southern Rhodesia also had malleable similarities with that produced by its Northern Rhodesian counterparts, considering it was coming from the white settler community that had assumed a preference for scenic watercolour landscapes, as Morton (2013: 275) had earlier pointed out. Ellison also writes about Joan Evans as an artist who exhibited throughout Southern Africa. According to Ellison (2004: 16):

She painted in both watercolour and oil displaying an exemplary technique but in later years with certain predictability. Her best known subjects were *Masasa* trees and blue hills, plus the ubiquitous jacarandas; all tended to be painted with sweetness that did not appeal to the more austere critic but which had an enormous popular appeal.

Ellison (2004: 17) observes that “in the 1940s and 1950s outside influences left their mark on the local art scene”. She also identifies Canon Ved Patterson, founder of Mission Art School at Cyrene in Southern Rhodesia, as being instrumental in this regard. “This school contributed greatly to the development of the present excellence of Zimbabwean sculptors such as Tubayi Dube and his students” (Ellison: 2004: 17). Dube, a Zimbabwean who was born in 1930 and attended Chirodzi Art Night School in Harare in 1958 (Lechwe Trust Catalogue: 2009: 21), later settled in Zambia. Ellison (2004: 14) writes:

Tubayi Dube who exhibited at the Rhodes Gallery before Zambian independence influenced many of the younger Zambian sculptors. He grew up in Southern Rhodesia, and followed Bente Lorenz and her husband to Lusaka. Lorenz, a well-known ceramist, set up a studio in Lusaka in 1963, and Dube worked with her. His stone carvings are powerful creations in local material which owe much to his southern Rhodesian origins.

According to the Lechwe Art Trust catalogue (2009: 33), Lorenz was born in 1922 in Denmark and had undergone some formal training at the School of Arts and Crafts in Copenhagen. Before she moved to Africa she had worked in textiles, ceramics and graphics in Copenhagen and London. “In 1955 she established her own ceramic studio in Harare, Zimbabwe. Later she moved with the workshop to Lusaka in neighbouring Zambia” (Lechwe Art Trust catalogue:

2009: 33). In the Lechwe Art Trust catalogue (2009: 3) it is stated that she was part of the exhibition that was held during Zambia's Independence Day celebrations in 1964, which will be highlighted in more detail. The catalogue further suggests that she "made a major contribution to the development of the visual arts" (Lechwe Art Trust catalogue: 2009: 33). She is also recorded as having worked with "various Zambian women potters" who made "pots in the traditional way", which she then glazed and fired. Apart from the art school at Mindolo, Kitwe (Kausa 2009: 3), this collaboration of Lorenz, Dube and the women potters appears to be the first that shows a member of the white settler community and a local group of Africans sharing the same studio space in a workshop setup.

1.2.1 Zambia's independence and the post-1964 art scene

Despite the example above, at the time of Zambia's independence, interaction between whites and blacks was still very minimal, more so on the contemporary art scene, as Cynthia Zukas points out⁴. (Zukas is a prominent Lusaka-based artist and philanthropist of European descent who settled in Zambia in the 1960s and still lives in Zambia today). Born in 1931 in Cape Town, South Africa, Zukas attended the University of Cape Town where she obtained a BA in Fine Arts. Like Lorenz she came to Zambia as an academically-trained artist. According to Zukas, the art scene she found in the newly independent Zambia was "hard to describe", categorically "because it was like two worlds, it was a hangover from the federation, the Cultural Services Department were doing their own thing and the local whites ran the Lusaka Arts Society" (Zukas 2015). Zukas recalls her first year, 1965:

I hadn't been here very long, I can't remember the exact date, and I saw an advert in the papers that there is going to be a meeting for the Lusaka Art Society, the chairman at the time was the local rep from the British Council, the first few years the British Council was very active, so I thought right, this is my introduction to the art scene here. So I went to this meeting of the Lusaka Art Society. I had only been here a couple of months and to my utter surprise I was immediately made secretary, and I was pretty surprised to find at their annual art exhibition which were open to everybody, still there were no Zambians or no indigenous Zambians at all if you want to use that word. Now one really lucky thing that happened also the same year, I met Mrs Bente Lorenz, she had been here before me at least a year or more but before independence, so I in turn roped her in to become chairperson of the Lusaka Art Society and our first task was to

⁴ Zukas, C. February, 2015. [conversation] (Personal communication) I conducted a recorded interview with the artist at her home in Lusaka, Zambia.

try and widen the society. It wasn't easy, the few Zambian artists and craftsmen looked with suspicion on the art society. For the next annual exhibition, we scraped around whatever arts and craft locally we could find (Zukas, February 2015, personal communication).

While Lorenz and Zukas attempted to transform the art scene in Zambia, one of their strongest recruits was Henry Tayali.

1.2.2 Henry Tayali: Zambian art scholar, a misunderstood visionary

Conceivably, the Southern Rhodesian influence on the development of contemporary art in Zambia may also be linked to an artist generally accepted to be the most celebrated artist to come out of Zambia, Henry Tayali. The arrival of Tayali not only brings in an element of integration but also a shift in artistic content, as will be demonstrated. It can also be argued that, for the first time, the contemporary Zambian art scene transformed and began developing a more scholarly and less decorative paradigm, where the artist as a professional would begin to question society and interrogate the role of the artist. As much as Tayali is remembered as a painter and sculptor, a fact that is constantly overlooked is that, for close to two decades, he was one of the most “educated” artists in Zambia, well versed in the worldwide art discourses of the time, who at least leaves a traceable legacy. Born in Serenje, Northern Rhodesia in 1943, he spent his early years in Southern Rhodesia. Setti (2000:39) writes:

He began to show artistic talent at an early age. At the age of 12 he moved with his family to Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia where his talent was soon noticed by Mr Alex Lambeth an artist who ran a small centre on behalf of the African Affairs department of the Bulawayo City Council. Like other families Henry's family had migrated from Zambia along the traditional route to the prosperous jobs on the mines in South Africa, but, instead his father found employment in Bulawayo.

However, records at the Zambia Visual Arts Council (VAC)⁵ indicate that “By the time he was 10 he had already become a painter of promise” (VAC 1: 2015). Young Tayali never took art in secondary school and “It was not until he was 'discovered' by Alex Lambeth that he had his first art lesson”. VAC records indicate that:

Even then his training did not amount to much as the Lambeth art centre was being run more as a means of keeping little boys away from mischiefs of the streets than a real

⁵ In some cases, the research data I have gathered from the Visual Arts Council of Zambia have been difficult to cite with complete accuracy. In these instances, I will name the sources as VAC 1, 2, 3 (etc.) as I have noted other researchers have done.

art school. For one thing Mr Lambeth was too busy with his own work to devote much time to the centre. All the same, Henry thinks that the initial help and encouragement he received from Mr. Lambeth at a most critical period in his life was the greatest thing that happened to him as a boy (VAC 1: 2015).

Lambeth's school, the Mzilikazi Art Centre, started as a welfare project to develop artistic talent in young people who were roaming the streets (Setti: 2004: 40). Henry Tayali was handpicked for the project by Lambeth; it is not clear, however, how long he stayed at Mzilikazi (Setti 2004: 40), but along with other boys he "learned painting techniques, Lambeth's favourite medium and attended tutorials about art under Lambeth", who then assisted Henry to exhibit for the first time. VAC records indicate that:

When Henry was only 15, Mr Lambeth arranged the Bulawayo City Council to sponsor his first exhibition. It was a double first in the sense that it was the first ever exhibition put on by an African in Bulawayo (VAC 1: 2015).

In the catalogue for a retrospective exhibition held by Mpapa Gallery, which was co-authored by Cyril A. Rogers former Director of the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Cynthia Zukas, Hanne Kabungo, Margeret Plesner and Faustin Kabwe, reflecting on his formative years, Zukas and Kabungo (1989: 3) point out that:

. . . while carrying on with his general education, Henry continued to take his art seriously, winning Art prizes while still at school. In 1964 he exhibited in Salisbury, the capital city of Rhodesia, helped by Mr Frank McEwen, director of the Rhodesia National Art Gallery and supporter of African artists. Despite the support he was getting from a few individual who recognised his great talent, Henry was aware of the unequal opportunities for blacks in Rhodesia and the barriers to his further studies so he returned to Zambia in 1966.

According to Setti (2004: 40), it was Tayali's growing political consciousness which led him to leave a Rhodesia that was still under colonial rule. Upon arrival in Lusaka, he took part ". . . for the first time, in a group exhibition, with the Lusaka Art Society, at Evelyn Hone College in 1966". It must be noted that, unlike the works described by Ellison (2004: 15,16) (the "evocative landscapes" by van Wyk, the "beautifully tonal pastel nudes" by Struyf or the "picture-postcard and pretty work" being displayed in the LAS exhibitions back in Tayali's home country – Northern Rhodesia at the time), Tayali's paintings were depicted from his memory, showing ". . . scenes of African social life in the city, people at bus stops, beer halls, markets etc" (VAC 1: 2015), (Figure 4). According to Setti (2002: 40), Tayali was generating

“his social conscience, which began to emerge in his art”. He developed radical points of view, with a “commitment to African liberation and the welfare of the common man”. This is thematic content that was non-existent in the LAS workshops in Northern Rhodesia just before independence (Ellison 2014: 15). Setti (2002: 4) asserts that Tayali developed “intense dealings against racial prejudice, injustice and poverty” and these views “found expression in his work”. According to Zukas and Kabungo, “Although he had only recently left school, it was apparent to many, that he was a young man of talent and maturity. Soon after this he received a government scholarship to study Fine Art at Makerere University in Uganda from 1967 – 71” (Zukas and Kabungo 1988: 4). While Tayali was not the first Zambian to obtain an art education from Makerere (Petson Lombe graduated from there in the late 1950s⁶, Berlington Kaunda in 1969⁷ and Kafungulwa Mubitana in 1965⁸), it can be argued that he remains the most noticeable among them in terms of the works that he still has on display in several Zambian collections. It was the four years at Makerere that would ignite the young Tayali to assume a visionary trajectory. Here he would:

. . . learn as much as possible, including all areas of aesthetics, art history, philosophy, and African culture. He experimented with different techniques and materials and exhibited paintings at the Uganda national Museum in Kampala. Henry was impressed with the role played by the School of Art at Makerere in the development of the cultural and artistic life of east and Central Africa and he returned to Zambia hoping to create a similar situation there (Zukas and Kabungo 1988: 4).

Tayali returned to Zambia and took up several government postings, among them head of Plastic and Visual Arts Section in the Department of Cultural Services, and in 1972 he went to Dusseldorf in Germany to take up a 3 year grant to study for an M.A. in Fine Art. Returning to Zambia, Tayali would later attempt to influence the University of Zambia’s governing body to introduce art at the institution: while his own art was

. . . contemporary, exploring and analysing the ideas of development in independent Africa, he still saw an understanding of the traditional arts of a country as essential. His proposal to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Zambia for the establishment of a faculty of Fine Art in 1975 suggested a collection of good quality masks, sculpture and pottery, systematically, artistically and critically analysed (Rogers 1988: 10).

⁶ See Kakande, A. (2008:166) *Contemporary Art in Uganda: A Nexus between Art and Politics*, Doctoral Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

⁷ Ibid. (p146)

⁸ See Mubitana: Curriculum Vitae, Livingstone Museum Library, Livingstone, Zambia.

Tayali's suggestion may have been informed by his experience at the Makerere Art School, as the school's founder Margaret Trowell's⁹ method of pedagogy intended "to build upon the artisanal practices which already existed, but to introduce new technical knowledge as a pragmatic way to 'develop' the visual arts in a region of Africa where representational art was rare" (Kasfir 1999: 141,142). In 1976, Tayali was appointed University Artist at the University of Zambia, where "he devoted a large part of his life to developing the Arts in Zambia. During the day he was involved with seminars, international workshops, research projects, etc. continually putting forward his ideas about Zambia having its own school of Fine Art" (Zukas and Kabungo 1989: 5). Zukas and Kabungo (1989: 4) explain that "He carried this aim forward for the next twenty years and in 1987 it almost looked as though he was going to succeed – sadly he didn't live to see this dream come true." According to Rogers (1989: 10), Tayali had the intention of further developing these notions concerning an interplay of "traditional" and "contemporary" art practices "in a book on the history of art in Central Africa". It can also be argued here that Tayali's intention was to develop a concept that would counter notions implying that only regions which have experienced brutal conflict possess an essential ingredient to inspire a creative direction. According to Rogers (1989: 10), Tayali argued that

... artistic traditions, developed in the societies of 'stability and continuity' could be creatively engaged in shaping the direction of contemporary art in Zambia ... Tayali's education in Europe and his international experience, whilst it enabled him to objectify the problems of his culture did not distance him from them.

Tayali could also often been seen either interacting with or sketching craftsmen in the open markets (Figure 5). His lectures locally and abroad had at the time made a considerable impression, as Kabwe (1988: 15) states:

I first met Henry Tayali in 1972. He was giving a series of lectures on Zambian cultural history at the Evelyn Hone College, Lusaka. I was very impressed by them and by the importance he placed on necessity of traditional African cultures as a contribution towards modern development in an international dialogue. His many travels abroad, where he worked for international cultural cooperation, were proof of his conviction.

I was privileged to hear another of his lectures at the University of Stockholm, Sweden in 1982 in conjunction with an exhibition of his paintings at the Ethnographical Museum in Stockholm.

⁹ As much as Trowell was considered a friend of the colonized Ugandan people, her methods are not without fault as they can also be interpreted as oppressing. See Wolukau-wanambwa *Uganda in Black and White* (2010-2014:57)

Tayali's colleagues clearly indicate that he was indeed a visionary, with a plan to see art discourse and pedagogy in Zambia advance to international standards. His ideas were, however, met with opposition as his fellow scholars, particularly those that were to give him the go-ahead to introduce Fine Art at university level, did not really acknowledge his perspective or status as a scholar rather than a 'mere' artist. I argue that while Tayali struggled to be considered an 'equal' among his academic peers at the University of Zambia, he had it easier being recognised as such among his artistic peers a few years earlier, as they did not consider him a 'mere' artist, neither did they consider him a 'mere' craftsman.

1.2.3 *Exhibition of Modern Zambian Sculptural Art, and the Zambian government's short-lived arts and culture patronage*

According to Zukas (2015), Tayali was one of the first black persons to take part in the LAS exhibitions. At the peak of LAS activities, black artists were relegated to the genre that was described as "modern Zambian wood sculpture" by the director of the Livingstone Museum, Barrie Reynolds (1966). While it can be argued that Zambia does not generally have an indigenous artistic "style" in the mediums of painting, crafts and sculpture, some peoples of the newly formed country had long-existing creative traditions of wood carving. Notable among them are the Lozis; Karen Melbourne (2013: 233), curator at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution writes of Lewanika, the Lozi King, describing him as "an under-recognized African king who audaciously utilized the power of art to envision his nation, Barotseland (now Western Province, Zambia)". Known for its ornamental wooden stools, staffs and bowls, the Lozi style is usually "adorned with decorative elements. Zoomorphic imagery – elephants and waterfowls in particular – dominate this genre" (Melbourne 2013: 233). According to Melbourne, as early as 1891 the Lozi King, an artist¹⁰ (Figure. 6) in his own right,

. . . embarked upon a large-scale arts campaign that included both training new generations of artists in wood and ivory carving, modelling, and basket weaving, and orchestrating the dispersal of the resulting works of art to an international audience. . . . [He] both purposefully established a workshop in which to create objects that would embody the best of Barotseland's style, and created an outlet in which to promote this new style (Melbourne 2013: 237).

¹⁰ "Lewanika was a renowned artist whose talents included carving wood and ivory, basket weaving and fabricating spectacular barges and pageants" (Melbourne 2013: 237).

Lewanika's strategy can be debated to have been a prototype for the approach later adopted by the government of a newly-established Zambia, as will be demonstrated, about half a century later, a strategy which, according to Damien M. Pwono and Jacques G. Katuala, was being "adopted by many African governments for the arts and humanities" to be used "for national unity by liberation movements some of which took power after independence" (Pwono and Katuala 1996: 23). Still concerning Lewanika in pre-independence Zambia, Melbourne (2013: 242) states:

Lewanika understood the value of distributing identifiably local art – Barotseland by style – both in terms of economic gain and propaganda. Wooden containers with a wide range of decorative elements were carved by either Lewanika's hand or that of an apprentice in his workshop, and – by way of gift, contract, or sale at a commercial outlet – they made their way to prestigious collections in Cape Town, London, Germany, New York, and Los Angeles. Their forms remained true to their historic functions, but their journeys suggest Lewanika's awareness of the power artworks with identifiable style possessed in international arenas.

As in Lewanika's Barotseland, which was renamed Western Province, wood sculpture was fully supported by the Africans that formed a government on 24 October 1964, when Northern Rhodesia became Zambia. The proliferation and distribution of these craftworks, however, was very much in the hands of white settler patronage, conceivably in line with Pwono and Katuala's (1996: 23) argument that "African societies and their cultures were studied only as curiosities and valued solely for the profit-making potential of exotic interest in them". The key figure in this regard was Managing Director of a Livingstone-based company called Traditional Arts (Africa) Limited, Dennis Erwin (*Exhibition of Modern Zambian Sculptural Art* catalogue: 1966) (Figure 7). Erwin was able to organise several exhibitions of these sculptures locally and abroad, a notable one being held in the same venue as the last LAS contemporary art exhibition, the Evelyn Hone College of further education in Lusaka, entitled *Exhibition of Modern Zambian Sculptural Art*. In the foreword for the catalogue, the then Minister of Information and Postal Services, Lewis Changufu, eulogised Erwin for rescuing "Zambian sculpture from degenerating" and openly declared that the very survival and long life of Zambian handicrafts was entirely dependent on Europe and the West. Changufu (1966: 2) declares:

I am pleased to present to you the Exhibition of Zambian Sculpture jointly sponsored by the Traditional Arts (Africa) Ltd., whose dedication to the revival of classical

African sculpture has rescued some of Zambian sculpture from degenerating into low quality mass produced curio art.

The survival of our traditional sculpture is largely dependent upon the European and American customers who collect African works of art. Unless efforts are made to present to them only works of good quality, there is a danger to these patrons buying anything that may be offered to them, thereby allowing bad works to go outside the country as representative of Zambian art.

This exhibition shows three types of Zambian sculpture. The first is what I may call classical Zambian sculpture, consisting of old pieces from the Livingstone Museum. The second part consists of contemporary sculpture that, although based on the traditional style, has new concepts, which is what the Traditional Arts are trying to promote. The third and last group shows examples of the mass tourism art.

The Livingstone Museum director, Reynolds, who wrote the text for the catalogue (1966), echoed Changufu's declaration and support of Erwin, also pointing out the importance of European patronage. "The patronage of artists is now taking a new form. Gone are the days of the individual patron able to afford his own sculptor and as a result the struggling artist, particularly in Africa, is in a difficult position". Reynolds (1966: 4) suggests that Erwin helped bring about new dimensions in the terms of patronage and that "Mr. Erwin has shown us a new approach, enlightened commercial patronage. This could be dangerous but in the right hands, sympathetic yet not overbearing, it is probably one of the best solutions for African art at the present time". Reynolds (1966: 4) also indicates that a good number of works had already been sent overseas although he does not specify where and under what circumstances, whether for sale or return to Zambia. He also hand-picked an artist for the attention of the visitors to the exhibition, proclaiming him "the best artist in the country". Reynolds (1966:4) declares:

I would commend to your particular attention the work of Rainford Sililo. This artist has had a varied career, at one time producing for the tourist market at Livingstone curios as crude and as poor as those exhibited in the LEST WE FORGET section of this Exhibition. Now, under Mr. Erwin's encouragement, he has blossomed into perhaps the leading Zambian artist and one whose work is in considerable demand. By his development alone a valuable service has been rendered to Zambia yet we are confident that there are other sculptors – and artists who are following hard on in his heels.

Ellison (2004: 26), describing the 1970s Zambian art scene, points out Sililo – who was Lozi by ethnicity and may therefore have had Barotseland artistic heritage – as one of the “talented sculptors working at this time” (Figure 8), noting that he was receiving important commissions such as sculptures for the Livingstone Hotel Intercontinental when “the Zambian art scene was growing”. Evidently, Reynolds continued to bolster Sililo, once again singling him out in the exhibition that was later shipped to Johannesburg for display under the revised title *Wood Sculptures from Zambia* (Figure 9) at the Adler Fielding Galleries the same year. Once again with the full support of the Zambian government, even though this was notably at the height of apartheid and Zambia’s new president Kenneth Kaunda was already at the forefront of supporting the African liberation movement. Although Sililo was continuously bolstered, the inventory for the Johannesburg exhibition (Exhibition of modern Zambian sculptural art catalogue 1966:5) indicates that among 34 other craftsmen and wood sculptors he only had 15 works out of a total of 230 pieces. Evidently, Erwin and Reynolds did not perceive that they were helping promote individual artists, but they believed that they were in fact at the forefront of supporting the present and extrapolating the future of art in Zambia. In his curator’s note, Reynolds (1966: 4) further indicates that:

Zambia is a new country but the skills of its wood carvers are age old. This new development of their work is exciting and stimulating. All those who are concerned with the Exhibition are confident that during the next few years this new approach will have a decided impact on the thinking of present day Zambian sculptors. It is important that they be encouraged and guided during these formative years so that they may play their full part in shaping the cultural heritage of Zambia and in developing the art of Africa.

According to clippings from South African newspapers¹¹ (Figure 10), the Johannesburg exhibition was well received and the event highly publicised: one headline in the *Sunday Times* (23 October 1966) read “*Kaunda sends S.A. collection of Zambian Culture*”, consolidating the Zambian government as being patrons of the creative arts. Again Erwin is eulogised as being the saviour of Zambian wood carving alongside the Zambian government. The *Sunday Times* reads:

Mr. Dennis Erwin managing director of Traditional Arts, Africa told me that the Zambian President, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, had given his blessing to the venture.

¹¹ Provided by Haenggi F. F., Art Archives – South Africa, 2015 who sent scanned copies of the newspaper clippings

The exhibition of more than 200 sculptures will later be flown to Los Angeles for display there in March, 1967. It will then be taken to other American cities before being flown to Zurich With the active encouragement of the Zambian Government's Directorate of Cultural Services, Traditional Arts, Africa has been able to create a nucleus of artists whose work is attracting recognition overseas.

Some of the works in the Johannesburg exhibition took more than five years to complete and were based on traditional forms and designs going back thousands of years (The *Sunday Times* October 1966).

It could be implied that, as a patron, Erwin (1966)¹² was making an attempt to exoticise the work by declaring that some took "more than five years to complete" and that some of them "were based on designs going back thousands of years"¹³. An article by Mary Parker that was published in the South African Newspaper *The Star* (26 October 1966) also brings into question how Erwin wished to portray "Zambian sculpture". Under the headline *Unique carving*, she clarified that "This exhibition shows three types of Zambian sculpture":

. . . classical Zambian sculpture, consisting of old pieces from the Livingstone Museum. The second part consists of contemporary sculpture that, although based on the traditional style, has new concepts The third and last group shows examples of the mass tourism art (The *Star* 26 October 1966)

Packer ignores most of these elements, bestowing upon the work a much more tarnishing, or bleaker, aura and categorisation. Parker (1966) writes: "Startled at the outset by a gigantic carving of an all-powerful deity, one walks straight into the heart and mind of primeval Africa as symbolized by the greatest collection of Zambian sculpture ever seen here". Adding more emphasis to the works' perceived primitiveness and ethereal quality, she describes them as ". . . a forest of curiously superhuman shapes that challenge the eye – and chill the blood. They demonstrate the vital difference between primitive art culled from the source and its synthetic substitutes". In one line, she also generalises the work as being produced by artists living in Zambia's remote areas, when in fact artists such as Sililo were at the time based in Livingstone (Ellison 2004: 14), which was formerly the capital city of Zambia in pre-independence times: "This vast exhibition (collected from remote areas where the artists still steeped in tradition have been encouraged to continue their hereditary symbolic carvings)" (Packer 1966).

¹² 1966 Sunday times news clipping

¹³ West African artists sometimes deliberately try to make objects look older as Westerners place value on the age of the object suggesting that the older the object is the more valuable it is. See Steiner B. C. (1994) *African art in transit*

Through the 1960s, the Zambian government continued to sponsor the arts. According to Zukas (2015), the LAS was also supported by an annual government grant: “The government was very interested in cultural development, both Kapwepwe and Kaunda were very vocal, the Department of Cultural Services had a generous grant”. In addition, the first few years after independence the Department of Cultural Services also supported “annual National Arts Festivals”, although Zukas “cannot remember when they stopped but for the first three or five years they were very good, they got off really to a very good start”. The biggest of these events was in 1967 when the department organised “a festival to celebrate the third anniversary of independence” (Ellison 2004: 22). It must be noted also that, prior to this, “Two official paintings of the independence ceremonies were commissioned by the government from David Shepherd, the well-known British artist”. For the 1967 celebrations, Ellison writes that “The Anglo American Art Centre was the venue for an exhibition of international art” and that it was not only restricted to the visual arts: “Zambian, Kenyan, Ugandan, Tanzanian, Chinese and Indian dances were performed at different centres”, while South Africa’s “Miriam Makeba was the star of the musical festival”. Ellison (2004: 23) indicates that not only the festival but also the art exhibition showed an unprecedented amount of diversity in terms of its participants. It might also be noted here that, perhaps for the first time after the Evelyn Hone college exhibition a year earlier, a group of black and white artists were seen exhibiting in the same space. “Amongst the artists representing Zambia in the art gallery were B H Ford, B Nkunka, Bernice Schwartz, Henry Tayali, Gabriel Ellison, A Mubutana, Bente Lorenz, Patson Lombe and Tubayi Dube” (Ellison 2004: 23). This exhibition, by a directive from government, was targeted towards international inclusivity. The foreword for the exhibition catalogue was written by Minister of Home Affairs, Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe. Just as Changufu lauded Erwin for the Zambian sculpture exhibition, Kapwepwe extolled Frank McEwen, who had been brought in from the Rhodes National Gallery in Salisbury, Rhodesia specifically to curate the exhibition. At the time, McEwen had already established himself as a colossus not only on the African continent but in Europe. In the *Independence Exhibition* catalogue, Kapwepwe (1967) declares of McEwen:

The committee responsible for the organisation of Zambia’s Independence Celebrations determined from the start that there should be an exhibition of art which would combine in one representative show, styles from all places and of all times. And in this context The National Exhibition of Art and culture will demonstrate the specific contribution of Zambia to that story. It is due to the enthusiasm and industry of Frank

McEwen that the International Exhibition is complete and can take its place in our Independence Celebrations.

Again it should be noted that this is not McEwen's first visit or contact with the Zambian art scene: he was in touch with LAS before independence. Ellison (2004: 19) places him as a key figure in the development of art in Zambia: "McEwen's influence was directly felt on Northern Rhodesia when one year he agreed to act as selector for the annual Lusaka Exhibition." Ellison explains that McEwen, in his speech at the opening, encouraged experimentation and stated that artists should "not become what he scornfully referred to as 'little old water colouring ladies of both sexes'"¹⁴. According to Ellison, "This caused much amusement and some offence, but the message was clear, and there were less 'safe' paintings submitted for the next exhibition". Perhaps such harsh criticism from someone of McEwen's standing may not have come as a surprise to the LAS group, since, back in Rhodesia, "McEwen's second influence was that of a critic. He set high standards and condemned pictures that did not work, making the artists overpaint them" (Beier 1968: 75). Around this period of considerably supportive patronage from the Zambian government, I contend that private sponsorship of the visual arts emerged, perhaps encourage by the public effort.

1.2.4 Anglo American's short-lived arts patronage

It can be argued that, shortly after the annual Independence Day celebrations of 1967, for the first time the Zambian art scene saw a public-private partnership in terms of sponsorship. In the same year, 1967, Anglo American completed the construction of office blocks in Lusaka, which were in fact designed by the husband of Lorenz the ceramist. Ellison (2004: 23) writes:

The building was designed by Erhard Lorenz who, encouraged by Robert Loder of Anglo American, his co-ordinator Philip Brownrigg, and particularly by the head of Anglo, Harry Oppenheimer, incorporated a beautiful gallery on the ground floor. The building was completed in 1967 and the gallery was lent to the nation for five years. It was this loan of the gallery that led to the formation of the Art Centre Foundation whose first chairman was Edward Shamwana who held the post until 1974. Later Valentine Musakanya was appointed Chairman. It was a philanthropic society making no profits, but dedicated to the promotion of all plastic and graphic activity.

¹⁴ McEwen rhetoric here is problematic, because he was contradictory, at the same time he told Africans to paint from their 'souls' in unaffected ways like children who were not trained formally. See Picton, J. 2005. Frustrated Visionaries, in Murray, B. Picton, J. (eds.) *Transitions: Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, 1960-2004*

However, although Ellison (2004: 23) writes that “the Art Centre Foundation was established in 1969”, an undated document¹⁵ provided by Zukas (2015) during the interview at her home in Lusaka reads in part: “This Foundation, established in 1967, is the National organisation in Zambia responsible for the Fine Arts The Foundation’s work is financed by an annual grant made by the Government of the Republic of Zambia, and by receipts from exhibitions”. In the interview, Zukas (2015) points out that, although the Art Centre Foundation was government sponsored and was chaired by black Zambians, there were still very few black Zambian artists in its membership:

When the gallery became available is when Anglo American and the government decided to create a foundation. As for the Art Centre Foundation, it started in 1967 and at that time there was a generous grant from the government. There were already works by Gabriel Ellison, but in the beginning there were very few works by Zambians, but it was already there. It was a very active body, we could employ a secretary, we had a curator we had regular meetings we had people from the Cultural Services (department) coming to them.

Earlier on Bente Lorenz and I were planning to wind up the Lusaka Art Society which was doing nothing and handing over to the Art Centre Foundation. So the Art Centre Foundation took over the National Collection and the Annual Exhibitions and we decided to start workshops, that was the one Bert Witkamp started at Evelyn Hone College, that really was a great success, Henry Tayali was around to be involved, all of us were involved, the lecturers from the Evelyn Hone College would come over and give criticism; if you look now at a list of the senior artists, half of them started in that workshop, it was a vibrant place; at a certain stage I lent them my etching press, this is when people like David Chibwe and Patrick Mweemba started to do linocuts.

I argue the Anglo American support of the visual arts in Zambia was short lived due to the privatisation of the mining sector by the Zambian government in the early 1970s. The annual children’s painting competition was halted in spite of the fact that the nationwide event had been “a great encouragement to young artists. The competition was discontinued when the mines were nationalized” (Ellison: 2004: 24). On the one hand, Anglo American’s withdrawal from sponsorship of the Zambian art scene can be observed as a developmental drawback that coincided with the decline of government sponsorship of the visual arts as well. “Anglo American gave up sponsoring their gallery in 1972” (Ellison 2004: 24). “The beautiful gallery

¹⁵ A one-page document entitled The Art Centre Foundation (ACF) was made available during the research interview. The document was published by the ACF.

at the Anglo American building had hosted many local and occasional international exhibitions, but when the company needed space the gallery was closed". Ellison (2004: 24) does, however, explain that, at the end of Anglo American support, "Some of the hotels sponsored art exhibitions, and the Cultural Services (department) formed a national collection". On the other hand, it may also be seen as liberating in that, perceptibly the Anglo American's gallery and art competition played as much a role in terms of agency as did the earlier, European "pioneers" of contemporary art. During this period, "... banks such as Barclays held a limited number of exhibitions at its main branch, displaying the paintings on the walls during business hours and at the evening opening" (Ellison 2004: 28). Zukas (February 2015, personal communication) also recaps that, after the Anglo American gallery, the visual arts scene had already gained momentum and "The British Council premises, the YWCA, City Library and various hotels" remained very active as exhibition venues; however, the exhibiting artists themselves remained predominantly of foreign origin:

By then the Evelyn Hone College had lecturers and the art department had started. So there were a number of artists that started getting involved, they included Trevor Ford, Nick Barrette, Andrew Macromalis, and Margaret Plesner. Again I haven't got dates but real known professional artists that started exhibiting at the time one was called Bernese Schwartz, there was another called Ioni Atchison and Fiona De Fletcher, they were either visiting or local, all three of them have gone on to do extremely well overseas. So we were beginning to get artists of international standard exhibiting and then when Ruth Bush came, things started changing. But I must say, this is what I was trying to say, the first couple of years it was Zambians and expats very separate (Zukas 2015).

However, as mentioned above, the late 1960s and early 1970s also signified the diminishing of government support of the arts in general, although this is not an isolated case peculiar to Zambia, as Senegalese curator N'Gone Fall indicated in the essay *State of Emergency*, published in the Autumn 2006 edition of *Art South Africa*. Concerning the 1960s, she points out that "African governments implemented national theatres, national museums, and national performing arts companies. Culture – well funded and privileged – was used as a weapon to fight against western imperialism. It was a halcyon time when it came to thinking about and building a modern Africa" (Fall 2006: 12). However, "later, things started to fall apart. National touring exhibitions stopped, museums closed, funds vanished. Culture was no longer the priority; African politicians blamed it all on "structural adjustments", the "happy days of Independence", she argues, were "over". I argue at this point that much of the support for the

visual arts was neither in public nor private business hands but was again overseen by a small group of individuals such as Bert Witkamp.

1.2.5 The Art Centre Foundation, Bert Witkamp and the Evelyn Hone College workshops

Through the Art Centre Foundation, the workshops at Evelyn Hone College in the 1970s became an integrated meeting place for local and expatriate artists, or black and white artists as it were. Concerning workshop programmes and activities, Ellison (2004: 23) explains that some “catered for self-taught artists who lacked the qualifications to enter the Evelyn Hone College. Both Henry Tayali and Bert Witkamp devoted a lot of time to the project”. Witkamp (2011) would in fact later become another key figure of non-African descent who would play an integral role in the development of contemporary art in Zambia. According to the personal biography published on his blog¹⁶, Witkamp was born in Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, in 1944. He studied professionally at the Rietveld Academy of Art for an art teacher’s diploma and later went to the University of Leiden for an MA in cultural anthropology, specialising in ‘non-Western’ art and the anthropology of sub-Sahara Africa; he also practised “drawing, painting, graphics (dry point and lino cut), murals (painting and mosaic), and batik stamp design” (Witkamp 2011) as his main techniques. Already an experienced artist, Witkamp arrived in Zambia in 1976. He came to Zambia to “face the challenge of making a living as an artist in a country which lacked much of the social infrastructure that makes (modern) art work”. (Witkamp 2011). I agree with the last statement appropriating a remark from artist and former director of Rockston Studio, David Chirwa¹⁷. According to Chirwa (2003:4):

A dynamic art scene needs serious and level headed critique. Zambia does not have one. Young and upcoming artists very easily and commonly rub shoulders with first generation artists. More so even get awards of the same value – rare happenings in other parts of the world. To achieve anything a plan is always needed. From what goes on, on the local art scene in Zambia, it is very clear there is no plan, things happen haphazardly.

Chirwa’s description gives a general overview of the Zambian art scene, the way it has been for decades. Shedding more light on the pulse of this art scene Senegalese curator, N’Gone Fall¹⁸ states “The Zambian art community is very small. Art professionals like gallery owners, agents, curators, critics and historians are desperately missing” (Fall 2003:7). In his chronicle

¹⁶ <http://artblog.zamart.org/search/label/Artists%20Profiles>

¹⁷ See *Abale* 2003 exhibition catalogue. David Chirwa is re-introduced later on the chapter, his work and brief profile also feature in Chapter 2

¹⁸ N’gone Fall served as one of the curators of *Abale* 2003 an exhibition held in Lusaka, Zambia.

of what he found on the ground, Witkamp (2011) gives a candid portrayal of the scene as well as the art he found being exhibited:

There was some of it, at the time, like the Art Centre Foundation and its annual exhibition, the art teacher's diploma course at the Evelyn Hone College, some venues for temporary exhibitions, some patrons and even some practicing artists! But an awful lot was not there. There was no artist organisation, no proper artist supply shop, no galleries or museums with accessible permanent collections, no art magazines and a whole bunch of other no's. It was a very small scene.

The Zambian artists, roughly, could be divided into established and informal artists. The first group had respectable positions in society, was educated, professional, and included artists of both African and European origin. Akwila Simpasa and Henry Tayali were the main African players in this field. At the European side were people like Cynthia Zukas, Bente Lorenz and Gabriel Ellison. The "informal" artists had no or little formal art education, lived in compounds (or in the servant quarters of benefactors in the residential areas).

I started to look for these guys (indeed, they were all men), found a couple of them and set up early 1976 an organisation initially called the Lusaka Artists Group and later renamed the Zambia Artists Association. Founding members, apart from myself, were Fackson Kulya, Patrick Mweemba and David Chibwe, joined later by Style Kunda. I had realised that these artists, and myself as well, in order to get anywhere, had to work together and organise themselves. It worked, not in the least because we had become a prominent productive entity. We got a studio at the Evelyn Hone College, by arrangement of the Art Centre Foundation and support of the College itself. Cynthia Zukas furnished the studio with an etching / lino press. The core members and a varying number of peripheral artists worked in this space until 1981 when it all collapsed.

According to Witkamp (2011), the artists in these workshops mainly practised graphic art because of the "availability of (raw) materials" and "broader market access by the very nature of multiple reproductions", although paintings and sculptures were being produced. Zukas (February 2015), details that, by this time, Tayali had returned from further studies in Germany. Remembering his involvement in the Evelyn Hone College workshops, Zukas (2015) recalls:

Henry used to go and give criticism, Henry was a very tough critic, I'm sure you have heard this from all of us but you see he wasn't wrong; if you go round to all these senior artists and say looking back now how do you feel about Henry's criticism I mean all the women will end up in tears just like me but he was doing something important, he

was saying to the artists either you are an artist or you are an amateur playing around, you've got to take your work seriously. I mean Bert was good in that Bert Witkamp and Trevor Ford were men of the people they would go in the pubs drinking and chatting with people; they were just on another level so we had all these influences.

Witkamp (2011) also echoes an account of the strong nature of Tayali's personality and protective nature with regards to the early contemporary art scene in Zambia. Upon arrival in Zambia, the Dutch artist attempted to host his first exhibition and made contact with a local artist with whom he could display his work side by side in a two-person show. At the time, Tayali was involved with the Department of Cultural Services and may not have been in the good books of a local journalist of the time. According to Witkamp, he may have been the victim of crossfire between the two parties, Tayali and the journalist. According to Witkamp (2011) the encounter was as follows:

My first encounter with him dates back to December 1975 when Fakson Kulya and I had our first exhibition at the Public Library of Lusaka. I had arrived in Zambia in April of that year and was looking for artists to work with. Fakson was the first person I met. Our intention to form a group of co-operating artists was extensively publicised in the newspaper *The Daily Mail*, at the time of our exhibition in December 1975 The journalist had utilized the occasion to lash out to the then Department of Cultural Services, perhaps to settle some old score. Fakson and I were manning the exhibition in the quietude of the library reading room when:

Trevor Ford and Henry Tayali stormed the premises after the publication of Daniel's article armed with expensive and big cameras. They photographed everything. All of our little art work - the work we had was small in size and there was not much of it; as if it was subversive material, endangering national security. After this intimidating show the duo disappeared and unfortunately I have never seen a print of the photographs they took. Henry happened to be Zambia's showcase artist at the time and Trevor was an internationally acknowledged cartoonist of Welsh extraction (Witkamp 2011).

As Zukas (2015) explains, the two European artists Ford and Witkamp would later become close friends as well as key individuals in the progression of contemporary art in Zambia. The alliance came about when Witkamp became involved with the arts workshops at the Evelyn Hone College where Ford was a lecturer at the time. As earlier stated, Witkamp went ahead to form the Lusaka Artists Group, and they would continue exhibiting at the college and the Library, among other places. Apart from the etching work with which he was involved at

Evelyn Hone College, Witkamp was also practising ceramics. “Much of my work in those days was an attempt to combine western and African visual elements or stylistic features with varying degrees of success. As of 1977 my main art work was in ceramic mosaic” (Witkamp 2011). The same year, 1977, Witkamp was commissioned by the Zambia National Building Society to create an ornamental art work on its newly constructed main building on Cairo Road in Lusaka. This was at a time when government had stopped funding the arts directly through the annual grant (Zukas: 2015), however the Zambia National Building Society was a parastatal company and this was therefore an important and high-profile commission. This commission, however, was first given to a local artist Aquila Simpasa, who is described by Witkamp (2011) as “a brilliant draughtsman and painter”¹⁹, but, according to Witkamp, Simpasa was unable to execute the work because he lacked the “experience in monumental art work” and had “no technical understanding of such productions”. Witkamp points out that Simpasa was to engage a sophisticated method and was supposed to create a concrete relief “by using petrol to eat into big polystyrene foam sheets”. Witkamp describes visiting Simpasa at the site where the work was being created and “saw him depressed amidst a heap of these eaten into polystyrene sheets”. Perhaps frustrated, the Zambian abandoned the work and soon left for the United Kingdom. It is at this point that Witkamp was approached by the architects. He advised them against a concrete relief, “having consulted a structural engineer”. He “favoured a mosaic mural” and suggested this was a better option as it “could be made of Zambian raw materials and did not require imported goods Foreign exchange (hard currency) was scarce to get. A truly Zambian mosaic it was to be” (Witkamp 2011). Although he made these suggestions to the architects, he “did not know a thing about pottery and mosaics”, and he turned to Bente Lorenz, whom he describes as “a great potter and friend”. The only help Lorenz could provide was a book in Spanish. It was on earthenware pottery glazes “as used by the Moors in Spain a thousand years ago” (Witkamp 2011). Witkamp, still needed more instruction on how to go about ceramics, especially on a large scale, then turned to the Evelyn Hone College. Witkamp (2011) describes the process and challenges in detail:

Luckily the Evelyn Hone Library had a great book by Michael Cardew titled Pioneer Pottery – inspired by his work in Nigeria. That book gave me in a general way the technical information I needed. Bente's book gave me the formulas of lead based glazes that could be made using litharge of the Kabwe zinc & lead mine. Luck or Provenance landed me with a small kiln, good enough to do the experimental work of body and

glaze formulation. I produced a draft drawing of about 4.5 m² and samples of a range of tiles and colours. The architect, contractor and commissioner went for it. To date the mosaic mural is still intact – last time I saw it not a single tile had come off. You don't see its mostly bright earthy colours very clear as it never gets a wash, and the ceiling above it has not been equipped with electric light to illuminate the imagery, recessed behind the ramp. But from my point of view the work had been done, much of it during great turmoil and misery inflicted by Ian Smith and his supporters on Zambia. It was time to move on.

Witkamp completed the work in 1979, a very turbulent time in Zambian history, when the country was in conflict with Rhodesia and South African forces. It is not clear whether Witkamp, like many other Europeans, decided to leave because of the instability in the country; however, for him:

Moving on meant moving back to the Netherlands. I went back to school, again as a student, now at the University of Leiden whereas of 1984 I also held junior teaching positions. My study focused on anthropology of sub-Saharan Africa and non-Western art (Witkamp 2011).

He would later obtain an MA in anthropology in 1988, and this distinction was earned by his research on *Makishi* in the North Western Province of Zambia. Soon after, he returned to Zambia “now as a development worker engaged by the Netherlands Development Organisation SNV to establish a museum and crafts project”. This in turn saw him becoming the director of that Choma Museum and Crafts Centre Trust Ltd and he continued to support the CMCC as consultant until April 2008 (Witkamp 2011). He would then help establish an art gallery at the museum. When he left the museum he “did do a bit of art related consulting and was a member of the editorial team supporting the production of the book *Art in Zambia* by Gabriel Ellison”. Witkamp's role in the development of contemporary art in Zambia cannot be underplayed, neither can his closeness to the “self-taught” Zambian artists whom he found and worked close with at the Evelyn Hone College Workshops, however, it can be suggested that he too did not give local Zambians enough room to assert their own agency in terms of their own knowledge production as artists seeing he introduced to them the graphic arts taught in European art schools.

1.2.6 Mpapa Gallery, the first privately owned and commercial gallery and the unique role of Ruth Hartley

When Witkamp left in 1979, a new private gallery was established in Lusaka by Joan Pilcher (now Joan Jenkins), another art patron of European descent who arrived in 1967, but would only get seriously involved in the visual arts much later and become a key player on the contemporary art scene in Zambia. Jenkins co-founded Mpapa Gallery with a friend, Heather Montgomery (now deceased). Through personal communication on 22 May 2014, Jenkins described the period as “undoubtedly, the richest and most rewarding time” of her life. Jenkins (2014) further recalls:

I have been remembering what a colossus Henry Tayali was – and how I first met him as a very young student when he was still at Makerere. My ex-husband Mick was an exceptional graphic designer and had also been very much involved in the arts scene in Nigeria in the 1950s, working with people like Ulli Beier, Suzanne Wenger, Twins Seven, Asiru and many others. Naturally, when he came to Zambia he established links with local artists (such as Henry) and it was through Mick that I met many of the inspirational people of that time. One of whom was Akwila Simpasa.

It is at Mpapa gallery that Witkamp’s group of apprentices (namely Fackson Kulya, Patrick Mweemba and Style Kunda, from the Evelyn Hone College workshops, who had managed to establish themselves as printmakers) found a ready market, although the new gallery came in with its own strict tastes and requirements. The establishment of Mpapa Gallery appeared to suddenly breathe new life into the art scene since the closure of the Anglo American Gallery and the dwindling government support for the arts. Kausa (2009: 3) pronounces: “The Zambian artists breathed a sigh of relief when Mpapa Gallery opened. It was the first commercial gallery in the whole country situated in *Cha Cha Cha* Road in central Lusaka”. Zukas was appointed a trustee in the early years of the gallery. According to Zukas (2015):

It’s quite a nice story because her husband Nick Pilcher the great graphic artist, he had just put up a new building for himself in town and he offered Joan the ground floor as a gallery. I think right from the beginning the attitude was to set high standards. I mean in those days there were still all these Zairean artists wandering around and people who thought they were artists just because they could paint. First Mpapa were against wildlife paintings, that is what everyone was doing and half of them had never seen animal, they would come saying ‘I’m an artist I have copied a picture of something’. But the standards, they were very fussy, where Ruth [Hartley] I think was very helpful, from my memory she would never reject something without talking to the artist and explaining because quite often an artist will come with about 20 paintings and she would only take four or five. But it was quite a long while before I was asked to join,

then after a while they asked Patrick Mweemba, and Style Kunda was around but I don't think he came on the committee, he used to hang paintings and things like that, but once we were a committee I suppose we used to meet together to look at works and say 'reject' if they are not good enough, 'go back and come back in 6 months' time' -- we were very strict about not exhibiting works that we have seen before and I think it worked, I think Mpapa Gallery looking back had some really first class exhibitions.

Ruth Bush (now Ruth Hartley), mentioned above by Zukas, is another key figure of foreign patronage on the Zambia visual arts scene who was not only key as a practising and teaching artist but also as an arts administrator. Both Zukas and Hartley contributed some funds towards gallery operations upon joining. Hartley had known Zukas from the Art Centre Foundation when she had just arrived in the country in 1973, and their camaraderie would become the gallery's driving force and can also be said to have been strengthened because they were like-minded. In personal communication on 18 May 2014, Hartley stated:

As a young adult I was committed to the ending of Apartheid and racism and had become a member of the Youth Wing of the South African ANC. Cynthia and I had both been to the Michaelis Art School in Cape Town, South Africa, though some years apart. We discovered that we shared the same political commitments and knew some of the same people in the ANC. My beliefs informed my work for Zambian artists at the Mpapa Gallery but I had to be discrete about them as expatriate opinion was largely in disagreement with President Kaunda's leadership of the Frontline States and this was where our first market lay.

In 1980, long before she became the manager, she held a solo exhibition in the gallery. Her painting *Chikumbi Bombings*, 1979 (Figure 11) is on permanent display as a main exhibit in the Lusaka National Museum, Zambia. It captures the horrors of the bombings by Ian Smith's Rhodesian forces near Chisamba, just outside Lusaka, in 1979. Speaking of the painting in personal communication on 16 July 2014, Hartley recalls:

The Rhodesian Air Force had taken charge of the sky over Lusaka, threatening to shoot down the Zambian Air Force while bombing a ZAPU camp on the outskirts of the city. They had prevented a British Airways flight from landing while they carried out their half-hour reprisal. The streets of Lusaka were lined with silent, shocked people

watching the cars, lorries, trucks and any vehicles that could be commandeered, bringing in the wounded – hundreds and hundreds of them, burnt and maimed and dying, driven under the flaming flowers along Cairo Road from the flaming killing ground where they had been ambushed, to the over-stretched and desperate teaching hospital. The doctors and nurses treated those they could save and left the dying to die. Those they treated died later because there was no anti-tetanus treatment. There were not enough hands free or available to give people in shock a sip of water. It was slaughter.

Nevertheless, it was from 1984 to 1993 that she was the Managing Director of the gallery. According to Hartley (2014), the running relied on voluntary work from its directors – which included Tayali – and the costs of exhibitions were covered by commission on sold work. “There was never enough money to pay the manager however, and the directors did not benefit financially from the gallery” (Hartley 2014). She explains:

I undertook the management of the Gallery in circumstances of constant economic and social change. My remit was to increase the number and frequency of exhibitions while maintaining the quality of the work. I developed Mpapa Gallery until it had an average of 10 exhibitions each year thus providing income for about 50 artists and their families. It became apparent that Mpapa, the only gallery in Zambia, played a unique and important role in the cultural life of the country. Over a critical period politically it was the main resource and support for Zambian artists. Mpapa Gallery was asked to work with the British Council and the Cultural Attaches of various embassies. (Hartley 2014).

It can be argued that, at the time, the concept of a commercial art gallery was not fully understood, which among other things may have been a harbinger for its imminent collapse. According to Hartley (2014),

. . . few artists and indeed, few art buyers had any previous interaction with a gallery before. We did encounter on rare occasions both envy and suspicion. This was in spite of our careful accounting and our absolutely ethical operation. We met exploitation of artists and the gallery. To our shock we found foreign cultural attaches and diplomats were among the exploiters. At a time of financial crisis, they deliberately paid for art in old kwacha instead of at the US dollar value of the work. They told me that they did not care about the artists but were collectors of African art intending to sell it on.

It can be argued that Hartley's description narrates power relations between the artists and foreign patrons -- who are mostly foreign diplomats -- that are still very much at play on the Zambian art scene today, fuelled by decades of the lack of availability of formal academic arts training. These are challenges that would motivate Mpapa to instigate artists' workshops, as will soon be highlighted; nevertheless, to a large extent, the artists' humble education and need to put food on the table would greatly impact the "visual vocabulary" and "artistic sensibilities". According to Hartley (2104):

There were few Zambian artists who had benefited from an art school education. Many Zambian artists were self-taught or had been instructed by 'Zairean art masters'. A number were fixed in intuitive modes of working. There were however an increasingly large group who had a rather limited art teachers' education but who were immensely talented draughtsmen and were working in a 19th century representational mode of art. Easel art as a way of making a living was the preoccupation of all these artists. Wildlife art was the biggest earner in Zambia. Tourists looked for that and for a romantic view of African life particularly women carrying or feeding their babies. Mpapa had to encourage Zambian artists to find their own authentic modes of expression. At first this seemed to be a financial risk for them but they quickly embraced the concept. Even as late as 1991 few artists understood that the commission taken by a gallery was to cover the costs of exhibiting their work and that it was not a profit that the directors pocketed. Every one of these artists deserved respect and encouragement but also badly needed positive criticism and support. I was put on my mettle every day and indeed learned more about making art through Mpapa and its artists than I had ever learned at art school. It was clear that Mpapa Gallery's role was as a resource for artists and not only to exhibit their work.

Hartley (2014) also indicates that, to address the aforementioned gap in art education, Mpapa initiated several key artists' workshops that were strategic to personal skills development at the time as well as the planning and inauguration of the *Mbile* workshops; these were partially funded by the Triangle Trust Workshops, which will be cited later. *Mbile*, a Bemba word meaning "the call of a village", is a fitting workshop for what is arguably the most important workshop to take place on Zambian soil, as it would become a blueprint for all workshops that followed. Anna Kindersley, the Exchange Co-coordinator for Triangle Trust in 1993, travelled to Zambia the same year to help set it up. In the *Transitions* catalogue, she elaborately describes

the challenges and eventual success of setting up the event in a text titled *Working Together*. This is after she returned from the Pachipamwe International Artists' Workshop in Zimbabwe; upon her arrival in London, Robert Loder sent her back to Africa – it must be noted that the involvement of Loder and Kindersley is by extension another intervention of foreign patronage on to the Zambian art scene:

In Lusaka, there was a dedicated Mbile 'working group' consisting of Geoffrey Setti, Ruth Bush and seven other artists including Style Kunda, Patrick Mweemba and Flinto Chandia With only six weeks to the workshop, there was almost no funding. It was quite a challenge introducing companies in Lusaka to the concept of sponsoring the arts. Even today artists in Zambia struggle for visibility and for support from local and international corporations (Kindersley et al. 2005).

The first *Mbile*, despite the challenges cited, would attract participating artists from as far as Canada, the UK, the US, Nordic Europe and the whole of Southern Africa. According to Kindersley, the work was very experimental with regards to new techniques and artists were challenged to give slide presentations and discuss their work. Her narration of the event sheds more light on the significance of *Mbile*:

At the end of the workshop, the exhibition opening at the Lusaka Museum was packed, including government ministers and the media. In the next room there was an exhibition on witchcraft, which had hundreds of visitors every day and most of them were intrigued by the Mbile artwork. As a result, an unanticipated audience was introduced to contemporary art for the first time. Each donated a work made during the workshop either to one of the sponsors or towards the formation of a permanent collection, the first of its kind in Zambia.

Following their experience in organising the workshops, the Zambian participants established an infrastructure of support for artists. Five Mbile workshops took place, followed by Insaka workshop – all with the aim of boosting the visual arts in Zambia. There is no art school (except teacher training), and no National Art Gallery or arts library in Zambia, so the workshops have a significant role to play. The legacy of Mbile can be seen in the Rockston Studio set up by David Chirwa and fellow sculptors (Kindersley et al. 2005: 118).

Although instigated by Mpapa Gallery, *Mbile* was the Triangle Workshops' Zambian equivalent to *Thapong* in Botswana, *Tulipamwe* in Namibia, *Ujamaa* in Mozambique, Kuona Trust and *Wasanii* in Kenya, Rafiki in Tanzania, *Pachipamwe* in Zimbabwe and *Thupelo* in Johannesburg. *Transitions*, the Triangle Trust Workshops catalogue, lists Flinto Chandia, Tubayi Dube, Enoch Illunga, Stephen Kappata, Faxon Kulya, Style Kunda, Teddy Zebbie Muhango, William Miko, Adam Mwansa, Godfrey Setti, Shadreck Simukanga, Friday Tembo Lutanda Mwamba and David Chirwa as being participants in the workshops, either as mentors or trainees. Mpapa Gallery, nevertheless, was also involved in the bolstering of individual artists such as Stephen Kappata²⁰. Hartley (2014) provides a short chronological list of the main events as follows:

- 1987 Artists against apartheid, Mpapa Gallery group exhibition
- 1987 Stephen Kappata Havana Biennial Cuba
- 1989 Zambian National Art Exhibition Italian Embassy Lusaka
- 1989 Henry Tayali Retrospective Mpapa Gallery
- 1990 Art from the Frontline Glasgow Mayfest
- 1990 The British Council Vincent Woropay Sculpture Workshop
- 1990 The British Council Stephen Mumberson Print Workshop
- 1991 The British Council Vincent Woropay Sculpture Workshop
- 1991 Stephen Kappata Art Exhibition London Festival Hall
- 1993 Mbile International Artists' Workshop
- 1994 Mbile International Artists' Workshop.

In 1993, Hartley resigned from Mpapa Gallery, and the following year she returned to the United Kingdom, having left an ineffaceable mark on the Zambian art scene. The departure of Hartley signified the end of Mpapa Gallery and the close of a very vibrant period in Zambian contemporary art. In her interview, Zukas (2015) also points out the gallery's and Hartley's importance:

I think actually we did a really important job developing the visual arts here, as I say we set a standard, we brought in collectors who otherwise would not have seen the work, we eventually brought in Style Kunda and then Lutanda and then David Chirwa got involved and they were exposed to good art. I think we – played a very vital role in

²⁰ Kappata (b. 1936) was one of the most sought after Zambian painters described as “naïve” and “self-taught”, his themes featured recollections late-colonial Zambia, his work has generally been accepted to have Congolese influences and has been likened to that of the Congolese artists Moke and Cheri Samba. See Setti, G. (2000) and Kasfir, S. (1999)

developing art in Zambia. What was good about Mpapa is that because the standards were high people really looked forward to the exhibitions and we had a situation very often where we said right, opening at 6 o'clock and people will be waiting . . . and literally there was a rush. Unfortunately, the Henry Tayali Gallery and Twaya-Art Gallery have never managed to create that feeling of excitement. I think Ruth can take credit for that, between Ruth and Joan, the invitation gallery was a big factor (Zukas 2015).

It is evident here that Mpapa being the sole, privately owned commercial gallery for such a long stretch of time, with its perceived notion of “high standards” of art would indoctrinate Zambian artists in how 'African art' or 'Zambian art' ought to look like. As such, local Zambians were not given enough room to assert their own agency in terms of their own knowledge production as artists.

1.2.7 The end of the Art Centre Foundation and the formation of the Lechwe Art Trust

According to Zukas (2015), before the closure of Mpapa Gallery she had already sensed a downward trend in the support of contemporary Zambian art, and through an inheritance decided to put together some funds, creating an arts trust, calling together her friends, Henry Tayali and Bente Lorenz. She attributes this mainly to the fact that the

Art Centre Foundation by the 1980s was pretty well not functioning, and the Department of Cultural Services had no money to spend, and there was a feeling that there was a complete vacuum, no one was really supporting the arts.

Zukas (2015) also indicates that during this period there was a general lack of foreign exchange in Zambia due to some stiff measures under the Kaunda-led government, and so this is the reason why the fund was set outside Zambia, in the United Kingdom. When Zukas started the trust, her initial idea was to provide scholarships for Zambian artists because she thought this was the only way that the art scene would develop. In a brief history of the trust, in the collection catalogue, Zukas elaborates:

The Lechwe Trust is a charitable trust for the Visual Arts in Zambia, started in 1986 and includes the following aims: to provide scholarships to promising artists; to purchase or commission works of art for public display; to support organisations working for the promotion of the visual arts in Zambia and preservation of Zambia's

Cultural Heritage; to support and encourage art education in Zambia; to promote exhibitions in Zambia. Some of the organisations we have supported include: Mpapa Gallery, Zintu Arts and Crafts, Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Commerce, Zambia National Visual Arts Council, Choma Museum, Lusaka National Museum, Copperbelt Museum, Mbile and Insaka International workshops.

We have awarded short-term grants for artists to attend workshops and residencies within Zambia. We have also supported upcoming artists by supplying art materials and helping with framing costs for exhibitions. We have also sponsored four talented artists who have been granted Fine Arts degrees – three in the UK and one in Namibia. Two of them went on to obtain master degrees. Artists such as Godfrey Setti, Patrick Mumba, William Miko and Elisha Zulu have in turn made major contributions to the development of the visual arts, which is very rewarding for Lechwe Trust and for Zambia as a whole.

From Independence in 1964 a national Collection was being established by the government. The artworks were on permanent display at Mulungushi International Conference Centre for some years, but funds for purchasing new works ran out long before the collection was moved to Lusaka National Museum in the late 90s. During this time, from 1987 Lechwe Trust became the only Charitable Arts organisation in Zambia consistently acquiring contemporary art for public display.

We continue to look for outstanding art works to add to the Lechwe collection which now numbers well over 200 artworks. We have managed to save significant works created during the 1960s and 70s, and we continue to encourage artists to produce works of quality worthy of collection (Zukas et al. 2009: 1).

In 2012, Zukas gained recognition from the Queen of England for her contribution to the arts. *The Post* newspaper (2012) reported: “Cynthia Zukas’ contribution in promoting art in Zambia and internationally has not gone unrecognized, as such, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II has awarded an MBE to Zukas, in recognition of her services to visual art and to charitable work in Zambia”. Zukas (2015) indicates that she is gratified that the trust has managed to save a good number of works from being shipped abroad, as the main buyers were expatriates who would buy a really good work of art and take it out of the country. One such painting is *Destiny*, a large oil painting by Henry Tayali that was done in the artist’s formative years. The events that led to the purchase of the work are clearly documented in the Lechwe Trust catalogue (2009). The text reads:

. . . the painting *Destiny* was exhibited at the Mzilikazi Centre in 1964-65. It was admired by Tim Gibbs, the son of Sir Humphrey Gibbs the then Governor of Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. In 1966, when Tayali decided to return to Zambia, he sold the painting to Tim Gibbs.

In 1980, as soon as Zimbabwe gained independence Tayali went back to find his painting and offered to buy it back. Although Gibbs refused, he promised to allow Tayali to borrow it for exhibitions. And so began its long journey through Lusaka, London (The Commonwealth Institute in 1983) on to Paris. *Destiny* was reluctantly returned to the Gibbs family, who were then back in Britain.

In 1989, after Tayali's death, Mpapa Gallery put it on show at the Africa Centre in London, where it was seen by Cynthia Zukas the Chairperson of Lechwe Trust. After two years of protracted negotiations, the painting was finally purchased and successfully came home to be part of the Lechwe Art collection (Lechwe Trust catalogue 2009: 77).

The 1980s also saw the formation of the Zambia National Visual Arts Council (VAC) – which will be highlighted in Chapter 2 – Zambia's sole visual arts administrative body.

In 1989, in response to a draft cultural policy which the government had produced without reference to the local artists, Zambian artists initiated a meeting. . . . The formation of the council was the spark that set the Zambian art scene ablaze and changed the face of the country's art. There was more opportunity, more publicity, and more excitement (Ellison: 2004: 41).

VAC would then spread and have branches in other provinces that included Southern Province, Eastern Province, Copperbelt Province and Northern Province. The headquarters, named after Henry Tayali who died in Germany in 1987, was set up in Lusaka in a rented space named "The Henry Tayali Centre" that also serves as gallery space, for a long time being the sole exhibition space after the closure of Mpapa Gallery. "The Tayali Centre is run by the artists for the artists and depends mainly on donor funding" (Ellison 2004: 41). The initial donor partners were NORAD, the British Council, and the French and Japanese embassies. But, as already indicated by Zukas (2015), most of these donors have since pulled out of sponsoring the arts. Notwithstanding the agency by the Euro-American or "donor" and diplomatic communities in terms of general art patronage that has an influence on anything from subject matter to pricing of works is still widespread.

However, Zambian artists have over the years tried to “liberate” themselves from this yoke of dependency and VAC has been the most successful channel in this regard, particularly through being open to conceptualism. Fully run by artists since its creation, VAC has emerged to be the key outlet of conceptual art in Zambia as will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: 'GLOBAL' CONCEPTUAL ART AND THE ZAMBIAN IMPULSE

In Chapter 1 I examined aspects of the history of contemporary art in Zambia from the 1960s, when painting and sculpture were the focus, and I analysed the role, influence and the unfortunate results of European dominance during the colonial period (and beyond) on the Zambian art scene which has led to some artists declaring that conceptual art is 'foreign' and 'un-African'. In Chapter 2 I interrogate the assertion by many contemporary Zambian artists that conceptual art is 'foreign'. The chapter also examines the development of African Conceptualism, which leads into the following chapter in which my primary focus is to interrogate "Global Art's" inability to engage sufficiently with local art scenes in Africa.

The contents of this Chapter are divided into four parts. The first part deals with various definitions of conceptual art, drawing from three sources as a textual framework, namely the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Art Terms* (Michael and Deborah Clarke 2001), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (Michael Corris 2004), and *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology* (Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson 1999). The second part will attempt to frame conceptual art in reference to Africa using the catalogue *Authentic/Eccentric: Conceptualism in contemporary African art* (Salah M. Hassan and Olu Oguibe 2001) as well as *The Thought is the Thing* (Colin Richards 2002). In the third part I analyse the rise of conceptualism in contemporary Zambian art, specifically examining the work of Martin Phiri. It is important, I submit, to recognise that the 'founder' of conceptualism in Zambia, Martin Phiri, engaged with conceptualism in China, and not in Europe. As such, this complicates a simplistic assertion that conceptualism is simply bad because it simply stems from Euro-American dominance. Some Zambian artists have embraced conceptualism, but are also painfully aware of the need to navigate two worlds that at times appear to be in tension -- that is, the world of international curators and viewers who place high value on conceptual art and the world of local viewers who tend to shun conceptual art. Often, this juggling act is carried out by artists who have had the opportunity to engage internationally, such as those who have studied overseas or now live overseas namely Anawana Haloba, Victor Kalinosi, Lutanda Mwamba, David Chirwa, Baba Jakeh Chande, Victor Mutelekesha, Kate Naluyele and Chanda Mwenya. I examine their work in this chapter and show that the complexity of their work proves that Zambians can, indeed, engage successfully in conceptual art -- or art with some sort of conceptual impulse -- without having to be labelled as mere mimics of Euro-American art. In the fourth and last part I analyse

a select number of responses to the question “What do you understand by the term ‘conceptual art?’” gathered as primary data from recorded field interviews in 2013 conducted with 77 Zambian artists of varying academic backgrounds who are also at different career levels and are all members of the Visual Arts Council of Zambia. This question formed part of a research questionnaire drawn up by Professor Simbao in 2013²¹. The artists who were interviewed are from Lusaka and Livingstone, the two main contemporary art production strongholds of Zambia, one being the capital city with a cosmopolitan international community and the other being the “tourist capital”.

2.1 A general understanding of conceptual art: backgrounds and definitions

It is important to define conceptual art and then endeavour to frame it while trying to also unpack the various forms this mode of creative expression takes. This is a complex undertaking, as is pointed out by philosophy professors Peter Goldie and Elisabeth Schellekens in their book *Who’s Afraid of Conceptual Art?*. As Goldie and Schellekens (2010:9) write, “The trouble with trying to get a grip on conceptual art is that it’s rather like trying to get a grip on a wet bar of soap in the shower: the more you try to tighten the grip, the more prone the soap is to slip out of your grasp”. They argue that:

There is, in other words, something elusive about the very nature of conceptual art that seems to resist being summarised in one precise definition. It is even sometimes claimed that there are as many definitions of conceptual art as there are conceptual artists. One approach to gaining an understanding of what conceptual art is would be to consider it in its historical context, as an art movement that took place at a certain time in a certain part of the world. Seen from this perspective, conceptual art – is best grasped in relation to the movements that came before it and the socio-political background of the time. However, the problem that arises for this kind of historical narrative is that it runs the risk of paying too much attention to conceptual art’s particular historical context, that is to say, roughly, the period between 1966 and 1972 (Goldie and Schellekens: 2010: 9).

²¹ Professor Simbao drew up a list of questions for her own research and asked me to conduct interviews with contemporary Zambian artists using her list of questions. She also gave me the leeway to extend the interviews with further unstructured questions and responses, and we agreed to both draw from this data for our respective research projects, acknowledging our respective roles in the data collection.

Instead of laying out the complexities of the term “conceptual art”, The *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Art Terms* (Clarke and Clarke 2001) makes an effort to fix it in a specific timeframe, as a movement in the 1960s. This approach is rather awkward considering the likes of Marcel Duchamp predate the 1960s and Duchamp had already shown that he “hated the idea of Art as an autonomous concept” (Moure 1988: 8) and had developed a “disdain for servile compliance by artists with leading cultural conventions” (Moure 1988: 8). Further, conceptualism in art is still practised today, as will be pointed out throughout this chapter. Nevertheless, in the process of defining conceptual art, Clarke and Clarke (2001) nominate the American artist Solomon “Sol” LeWitt as being the individual person who is perhaps responsible for coining the term ‘conceptual art’, and they make the following suggestion:

A widespread movement from the mid-1960s through the 1970s, conceptual art emphasized the artist’s thinking, making any activity or thought a work of art without the necessity of translating it into physical form. The term gained currency after the 1967 issue of *Artforum* of the Minimalist artist Sol LeWitt’s article “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art” In its broadest sense, conceptual art can be traced back to the primitive artist who included the backbone in his drawing of a fish because he ‘knew’ it was there, even though it was outwardly invisible. The renaissance, with its concern for accurate depiction, could be said to have firmly placed the emphasis on perceptual rather than conceptual (Clarke and Clarke 2001: 65).

LeWitt’s *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* (1967) was published in Alberro and Stimson’s *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology* (1999) along with writings from a host of other artists and scholars. LeWitt (1967: 12) gives what is arguably one of the first attempts at categorising conceptual art, although he himself was classified as a minimalist²², indicating first and foremost its perfunctory nature as well as its being purposeless and above theory. In reference to himself, LeWitt (1967: 12) stresses:

²² “A type of abstract art, particularly sculpture, which is characterized by simplicity of form and a deliberate lack of expressive content. Its aim is a concentration on the pure qualities of colour, form, space and materials without the distractions of ‘composition’. The term was first used in print by British philosopher Richard Wollheim in 1965, though some have credited its invention to the American critic Barbara Rose. It first emerged in the 1950s and flourished particularly in the 1960s and 70s. Minimal art was mainly an American, as opposed to a European, phenomenon and among its main practitioners were Carl Andrew, Don Judd, and Tony Smith in sculpture, and in painting Frank Stella (early work), Ellsworth Kelly, and Kenneth Noland.” (Clarke and Clarke 2001: 158)

I will refer to the kind of art in which I am involved as conceptual art. In conceptual art, the idea of concept is the most important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art. This kind of art is not theoretical or illustrative of theories; it is intuitive, it is involved with all types of mental processes and it is purposeless. It is usually free from the dependence on the skill of the artist as a craftsman. It is the objective of the artist who is concerned with conceptual art to make his work mentally interesting to the spectator and therefore usually he would want to become emotionally dry.

LeWitt (1967: 13) also indicates that “Conceptual art is not necessarily logical”, although he does point out that “logic may be used to camouflage the real intent of the artist, to lull the viewer into the belief that he understands the work, or to infer a paradoxical situation (such as logic vs illogic)” (LeWitt 1967: 13). Without essentially pre-empting models of contemporary art that will be examined later on in the chapter, including the work of Duchamp, it might be helpful perhaps to momentarily illustrate a lucid example of such as pointed out by Goldie and Schelleken, Gavin Turk’s *Cavey* (Figure 12). Goldie and Schellekens (2010: 13-14) state:

. . . in 1991, the British artist Gavin Turk would have been disappointed if his examiners at the Royal College of Art had accepted his submission for his final degree, consisting of a simple blue plaque of the kind seen all over London (such as ‘Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, Prime Minister lived in this house, 1872 – 1886’). Turk’s plaque contained the words, ‘Borough of Kensington: Gavin Turk, Sculptor, worked here 1989 – 1991’. Gratifyingly for him, it was rejected by his examiners, and then swiftly snapped up by the market . . . Turk was making fun of his examiners, pointing towards how much they will disagree with the claim ‘worked here’ on the plaque, given as evidence of his years of study.

Nevertheless, returning to LeWitt’s (reference) argument, he also stresses the fluidity of conceptual art, suggesting: “The ideas need not be complex. Most ideas that are successful are ludicrously simple” and “What the work of art looks like isn’t too important. It has to look like something if it has physical form”. LeWitt’s explanation also lays emphasis on aesthetics²³ --

²³ “Aesthetics – The philosophy of the beautiful in art and taste. The present usage of the term originates from its adoption . . . to distinguish the study of the sensory, the beautiful, from that of logic, the study of reason and intellect.” (Clarke and Clarke: 2001: 5).

or lack thereof -- in conceptual art, an element that is also picked up and further unpacked by fellow artist Joseph Kosuth (1969), as will be pointed out. Concerning the visual aesthetic and function of conceptual art, LeWitt (1967: 13) writes:

Art that is meant for the sensation of the eye primarily would be called perceptual art rather than conceptual. This would include most optical, kinetic, light and colour art. Since the functions of conception and perception are contradictory (one pre-, the other post- fact) the artist would mitigate his idea by applying subjective judgement to it. If the artist wishes to explore his idea thoroughly, then arbitrary or chance decisions would be kept to a minimum, while caprice, taste and other whimsies would be eliminated from the making of the art (LeWitt 1967: 13).

LeWitt further points out that “The philosophy of the work is implicit in the work and is not an illustration of any system of philosophy” (LeWitt 1967: 14). Again the notion of “philosophy”²⁴ in conceptual art, or in art generally, is a point expanded on by Kosuth (1969) in his essay *Art after Philosophy* which also appears in the Alberro and Stimson anthology. Nevertheless, directly concerning the audiences of conceptual art, LeWitt (1967) emphasises that “it doesn’t matter if the viewer understands the concepts of the artist by seeing the art”, a statement that is problematic in itself in that it brings confusion as to whether the artist creates the work for himself or herself for cathartic or self-gratifying reasons. LeWitt (reference) further states: “Once out of his hand the artist has no control over the way the viewer will perceive the work. Different people will understand the same thing in a different way”. It is important to point out here that the notion of people “understanding” and “not understanding” conceptual art really manifests itself through typical case studies in Zambia, particularly concerning the latter notion as will be seen later on this chapter. Interestingly, however, LeWitt (reference) points out that he did “not advocate a conceptual form of art for all artists” even though he found it worked well for himself: “it is one way of making art; other ways suit other artists”. Again, in reference to the audience or viewer, he argues: “Nor do I think all conceptual art merits the viewers’ attention. Conceptual art is only good when the idea is good” (reference). Kosuth (1969) suggests that “. . . the world as perceived by the twentieth century science is vastly more different than the one of its preceding century”; therefore, humankind had perhaps become more intelligent and had begun to view things differently, which in

²⁴ “The study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality and existence” (Oxford English Dictionary for Students: 2006: 764).

broader terms may have called for a redefinition of art, and a re-examination of its function and the function of the artist discarding definitions of art before the 20th century. Kosuth declares that this is the century in which art truly grew free of philosophical strangleholds. Kosuth (1969: 160) argues:

The twentieth century brought in a time which could be called ‘the end of philosophy and the beginning of art.’ I do not mean this, of course, strictly speaking, but rather as the “tendency” of the situation. Certainly linguistic philosophy can be considered the heir of empiricism, but it’s a philosophy in one gear. And there is certainly an “art condition” to art preceding Duchamp, but its other function clearly as art limits its art condition between philosophy’s ‘ending’ and art’s ‘beginning’, but I don’t find this occurrence entirely coincidental. Though the same reasons may be responsible for both occurrences, the correction is made by me. I bring this all up to analyse art’s function and subsequently its viability. And I do so to enable others to understand the reasoning of my art and, by extension, other artists, as well as to provide a clearer understanding of the term “Conceptual art”.

In his argument Kosuth (1969: 162) further seems bent on the separation of aesthetics from art; he indicates: “It is necessary to separate aesthetics from art because aesthetics deals with opinions of the world in general. In the past one of two prongs of art’s functions was its value as decoration”. Clearly pointing the finger at philosophy and its many branches and schools of thought as being responsible for imposing aesthetics on art, he argues that it is an error which artists were only realising now, albeit he was writing in the late 1960s. Kosuth (1969: 162) argues:

So any branch of philosophy which dealt with “beauty” and thus, taste, was inevitably duty bound to discuss art as well. Out of this “habit” grew the notion that there was a conceptual connection between art and aesthetics, which is not true. This idea never drastically conflicted with artistic considerations before recent times, not only because the morphological characteristics of art perpetrated the continuity of this error but also because the apparent other “functions” of art (depiction of religious themes, portraiture of aristocrats, detailing of architecture, etc.) used art to cover art.

Kosuth (1969: 162) also points out that “The relation of aesthetics to art is not unlike that of aesthetics to architecture, in that architecture has a very specific *function*, and how “good” its

design is *primarily* related to how well it performs its function”. Within the same frame of argument, he further underscores that “Aesthetic thinking has even gone so far as to make examples of architecture not related to “art” at all, works of art in themselves (e.g. the pyramids of Egypt)” (Kosuth: 1962: 162). Notwithstanding, Graham Harman, a professor in philosophy at the American University in Cairo²⁵, draws similar side-by-side comparisons concerning art and aesthetics with particular reference to philosophy in his essay *Art Without Relations* published in the September 2014 issue of *ArtReview*²⁶. Harman (2014: 145) argues:

But if philosophy is not a form of knowledge, the same holds even more obviously for art. An artwork littered with scientific falsehoods might still be better as art than a pedagogical work that inspired young viewers to win a dozen Nobel Prizes. Just as little does art provide the sort of knowledge claimed by social or political explanations. Even a politically provocative work – Picasso’s *Guernica* (1937), for example – might succeed as art even among those it denounces. The specifically aesthetic handling of the theme might have greater or lesser power than the surface political message of the work, which in turn might be readable in ways that would baffle Picasso himself. Nor can we replace an artwork with its biographical or historical backstory. The art object, taken in a broad sense not restricted to mobile and durable entities, is just as resistant to knowledge as objects in the philosophical sense.

Nevertheless, returning to Kosuth, he argues that painting and sculpture are “not art at all but pure exercises in aesthetics” (Kosuth 1969: 162). He proposes Clement Greenberg²⁷ as being the key purveyor of bolstering an object’s function as art when it is assigned a decorative or formalist²⁸ role. Kosuth writes:

Formalist art, (painting and sculpture) is the vanguard of decoration, and, strictly speaking, one could reasonably assert that its art condition is so minimal that for all functional purposes it is not art at all, but pure exercises in aesthetics. Above all

²⁵ (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graham_Harman:2015)

²⁶ An international contemporary art magazine based in London.

²⁷ Clement Greenberg (1909 – 1994), “a dominant figure in American cultural criticism since 1940s” (O’Brien 1986: vi)

²⁸ “Formalism - An artistic and critical approach which stresses form over content in a work of art. According to the formalist doctrine, the qualities of line, colour, and shape are sufficient, and other considerations – be they representational, moral, or social – are deemed redundant or secondary. Such a concept played a crucial role in the development of abstract art that is art freed from any representational functions. In the early 20th century two of the leading formalist critics were Clive Bell and Roger Fry, while in the 1950s and 1960s the American Critic Clement Greenberg was highly influential, urging a ‘purity’ in modern art.” (Clarke and Clarke: 2001: 102,103)

Clement Greenberg is the critic of taste. Behind every one of his decisions there is an aesthetic judgement, with those judgements reflecting his taste. And what does his taste reflect? The period he grew up in as a critic, the period “real” for him: the fifties (Kosuth 1969: 162).

Kosuth’s observations on Greenberg continue with a declaration that the latter’s total disregard for a certain group of artists perhaps positioned the theories that Kosuth (1969: 162) disputes as being problematic in that they were “basically unsystematic on personally experiential grounds”. Kosuth (1969: 63) writes:

Formalist critics and artists alike do not question the nature of art “Being an artist now means to question the nature of art. If an artist accepts paintings, you are already accepting (not questioning) the nature of art. If one is questioning the nature of painting, one cannot be questioning the nature of art. If an artist accepts painting (or sculpture) he is accepting the tradition that goes with it. That’s because the word art is general and the word paintings specific. Painting is a kind of art. If you make paintings, you are already accepting (not questioning) the nature of art. One is then accepting the nature of art to be the European tradition of a painting–sculpture dichotomy.

This “painting–sculpture dichotomy” alluded to above by Kosuth will be discussed later in reference to contemporary art production in Zambia. Nevertheless, in his continued argument with regards to the separation of aesthetics from art, as well as his interrogation of the function of art, Kosuth (1969: 164) subpoenas Marcel Duchamp, bolstering him as being perhaps a redeemer of art. “The function of art, as a question, was first raised by Marcel Duchamp. In fact, it is Marcel Duchamp whom we can credit with giving art its own identity” (Kosuth 1969: 164). He suggests, however, that “a tendency toward this self-identification of art” (Kosuth 1969: 164) can also be seen beginning with Post-Impressionists²⁹ and gathering momentum with the Cubists³⁰, although he regards the works by these movements as “timid and ambiguous by comparison with Duchamp’s” (Kosuth 1969: 164). Kosuth continues using Duchamp for

²⁹ “Post-Impressionism – As the name implies, a term used to describe developments after and arising from Impressionism. It was first coined by the English painter and critic Roger Fry (1866-1934) The imprecision of such an umbrella term, for all its undoubted usefulness, is demonstrated by the wide variety of developments from Impressionism: the quasi-scientific examination of colour by Seurat and the Neo-impressionists; the structured examination of landscape by Cezanne in which lay the seed of Cubism; the writing, expressive brushwork of Van Gogh; the flat colour Symbolism of Gauguin and his followers.” (Clarke and Clarke 2001: 198).

³⁰ “Cubism – Generally acknowledged to have been the most significant movement of 20th-century art, Cubism was created by Georges Braque (1882 – 1963) and Pablo Picasso (1881 – 1973) in the period 1907 – 1914. It abandoned the traditional fixed viewpoint which had dominated western painting” (Clarke and Clarke 2001: 71).

contextual reference, particularly concerning the definition of conceptual art and, in broader terms, its “language” in comparison to formalist art. Kosuth (1969: 164) argues that:

The event that made conceivable the realization that it was possible to “speak another language” and still make sense in art was Marcel Duchamp’s first unassisted readymade. With the unassisted readymade³¹, art changed in focus from the form of the language to what was being said. Which means it changed the nature of art from a question of morphology to a question of function. This change – one from ‘appearance’ to ‘conception’ – was the beginning of “Modern” art and the beginning of “Conceptual” art. All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual (in nature) because art only exists conceptually [...] the point is this: aesthetics, as we have pointed out, are conceptually irrelevant to art. Thus, any physical thing can become object d’ art, that is to say, can be considered tasteful, aesthetically pleasing etc. (Kosuth 1969: 164).

Perhaps it might be helpful also to linger upon Kosuth’s last sentiment a little more by looking at another excerpt from Goldie and Schellekens (2010: 9). In a chapter that deliberately ponders on the definition of conceptual art, they give a slightly more abridged yet elaborate account of Duchamp’s iconic work earlier referenced by Kosuth. According to Goldie and Schellekens, “the most famous readymade of all” is “namely Duchamp’s Fountain” (Goldie, Schellekens 2010: 11), (Figure 11). Goldie and Schellekens (2010: 11-12) write:

The story is simple in its essential features. In New York in 1916, the Society of Independent Artists, of which Duchamp himself was one of the directors, put on an exhibition. The only criterion for entering an exhibition was that the artist had to pay an entry fee of six dollars. What Duchamp submitted as an entry, with the required fee, was a urinal that he had bought from a plumber’s showroom. He had turned it upside down, titled it *Fountain*, and then signed it “R. Mutt” (thus assuring anonymity) with the date 1917. The directors of the exhibition, acting against their own criterion, refused it on the grounds that it was ‘by no definition a work of art’.

(Goldie and Schellekens 2010:11, 12).

Goldie and Schellekens (2010: 13) further point out that “Part of Duchamp’s aim in his artistic statement was to challenge the definition of art and the role of the artist in art-making, and he

³¹ “Readymade – A term devised by Marcel Duchamp to describe pre-existing mass-produced objects, selected at random, which were then accorded the status of work of art.” (Clarke and Clarke 2001: 208)

did this in a highly self-reflective and playful manner. His work intentionally raises challenges such as these: “How can something such as a urinal be a work of art” and “How can the person who submitted this into an exhibition claim to be the ‘artist’ when he has participated so little in its making?”. It must be noted however that Duchamp’s efforts to contest long-existing and -accepted boundaries of what constitutes art was problematic, more so because he too belonged to the very system of the canon he was attempting to subvert. One curator who tries to bring this out perhaps more clearly is Dan Graham in his 1985 text *My works for magazine pages: a history of conceptual art*, which is also reprinted in Alberro and Stimson. Graham points out that:

. . .the “solution” which Marcel Duchamp had found to this problem of arts “value” was unsatisfactory.

In his “ready-mades”, Duchamp brought objects which were not considered as art when placed outside the gallery, into the gallery to prove dialectically that it is in fact the gallery that gives the object its value and meaning. Instead of reducing gallery objects to the common level of the everyday object, this ironic gesture simply extended the reach of the gallery’s exhibition territory. In bringing the “non-art” object into the gallery, Duchamp wishes to pace both the conventional function of the gallery to designate certain objects as “art” and to exclude others in apparent contradiction.

Essentially Duchamp attempted to question the aristocratic function of art and the art gallery as an institution. Because this question was only presented on a logical abstract level, his critique was itself immediately integrated back into the institutional system of gallery or museum art, becoming a kind of “idea” art (Graham 1985: 420).

Graham further problematizes the viability of Duchamp’s critique by pointing out that Duchamp “. . . failed to link this position of art and so called ‘non-art’ to more ambiguous phenomena such as the media” (Graham 1985: 421). He argues that, in his own experience of running a gallery³², he “. . . learned that if a work wasn’t written about and reproduced in a magazine it would have difficulty attaining the status of ‘art’. It seemed that in order to be defined as having value, that is ‘art’, a work had only to be exhibited in a gallery and then to be written about and reproduced as a photograph in an art magazine” (Graham 1985: 421).

³² John Daniels Gallery, New York, gave Sol LeWitt his first one-man show (Graham 1985: 418)

One other problematic example of documentation with regards to conceptual art is provided by Kosuth's own work *One and Three Chairs* (Figure 13), identified by art critic Tony Godfrey in his book *Conceptual Art*, as "an example of documentation, where the 'real' work is the concept":

'What is a chair?' and 'How do we represent a chair?' And hence 'What is art?' and 'What is representation?' It seems a tautology: a chair is a chair is a chair, much as he claimed 'art is art is art' was tautologous. The three elements that we can actually see (a photograph of a chair, an actual chair and the definition of a chair) are ancillary to it. They are of no account in themselves: it is a very ordinary chair, the definition is photostatted from a dictionary and the photograph was not even taken by Kosuth – it was untouched by the hand of the artist (Godfrey 1998: 10).

Godfrey (1998: 12), still on the work of Kosuth and the challenge of conceptual art fitting "any clear typology" or "restrictive definition", points out that the categorisation of conceptual pieces has often come with "absurd consequences":

When removing Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* from exhibition, the major museum that owned the piece was reputedly uncertain as to where it should be stored, there being no department of 'conceptual art', and hence no specific storage area. Eventually it was stored in the design department, the photograph of the chair in the photography department and the photocopy of the chair in the dictionary definition stored in the library! So in effect they could only store the piece by destroying it.

The aforementioned problems are perhaps more concisely interpreted in piercing clarity by Ian Wilson in the short text *Conceptual Art* first published in the February 1994 edition of *Artforum* and republished in Alberro and Stimson. "True conceptual art does not compromise itself by re-entering the traditional context of the visual arts" (Wilson 1994: 414). It can be argued that Wilson, in what can be interpreted as a final argument to annihilate both the physical nature of the object as "art" as well as the institutional space in which this object is displayed or performed, proclaims a more contemporary and evolved phase of conceptualism, which has supplanted that earlier practised and discussed by Kosuth and LeWitt in the 1960s. Wilson (1994: 417) argues:

Passing toward the centre of conceptual art, idea-oriented figurative writing, photography, and painting are on the remote periphery. Passing the visual realm of colours and natural form, we pass closer to the centre. We have already passed idea-oriented performance and social and political writing. We have passed abstract painting. We pass black and white abstract painting. Approaching the limit of visual abstraction, we pass from three into two dimensions and into language descriptions of abstract physical objects and events. Passing beyond metaphor, beyond criticism, beyond art, beyond space and time, we come upon the formless abstractions of language. Infinite and formless what is presented is neither known nor unknown. This centre. This is the heart of conceptual art.

It can be argued that conceptual art (and its practice) has defeated its own purpose, that of questioning the very notion of the “object” of art as well as an interrogation of both arts elitism and elitism in art. The art critic Lucy Lippard can be pointed out as having elaborated similar observation more clearly. Godfrey points out that “Lucy Lippard, a critic especially associated with conceptual art in the late 1960s, emphasized the dematerialization of the art object as a defining factor” (Godfrey 1998: 14). It can be argued that it is in Lippard’s text *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object From 1966 to 1972* that the term “dematerialization” is first introduced, and subsequently gained traction within the discourse of conceptual art. Lippard emphasises the notion of “dematerialization”, can be perceived as having the ability to break down “real barriers between art” and the “context” that often informs its production. According to Lippard (1973: 294): “Hopes that ‘conceptual art’ would be able to avoid the generalization, the destructively ‘progressive’ approach to modernism were for the most part unfounded”. Lippard (1973: 294) points out that “it seemed in 1969 that no one, not even a public greedy for novelty, would actually pay money, or much of it, for a Xerox sheet referring to an event past or never directly perceived, an ephemeral situation or condition, a project for work never to be completed, words spoken but never recorded; it seemed that these artists would therefore be forcibly freed from tyranny of a commodity status and market – orientation”. But the same thing happened to conceptual art at the time that Lippard was writing that happened to Duchamp’s *Fountain* about 50 years earlier. Just as Duchamp’s *Fountain* had found ‘acceptance’ into the ‘elitist’ art world, and selective gallery system it so purposefully attempted to interrogate, so had these newer hard-to-classify, ‘dematerialized’ objects, or indeed works of art. Teasing this out, and further describing the period after the 1960s, Lippard (1973: 294) states:

Three years later the major conceptualists are selling work for substantial sums here and in Europe; they are represented by (and still more unexpected – showing in) the world's most prestigious galleries. Clearly, whatever minor revolutions in communication have been achieved by the process of dematerializing the object (easily mailed work, catalogues and magazine pieces, primarily art that can be shown inexpensively and unobtrusively in infinite locations at one time), art and artist in a capitalist society remain luxurious.

It may be noted cursorily here that Lippard's above observation of the "magazine" or printed publication as an agent in the "dematerialization" of art was earlier pointed out by Graham (1985:421), when he suggested ". . . that if a work wasn't written about and reproduced in a magazine it would have difficulty attaining the status of 'art'". Nevertheless, Lippard goes on further to argue that "conceptual art has not, however, as yet broken down the real barriers between the art context and those external disciplines – social, scientific, and academic – from which it draws sustenance" (Lippard 1973: 295). Lippard observes that, although conceptual artists appeared to be able to deal "with technical concepts in their own imaginations", by the early 1970s there were still insufficient "interactions between mathematics and art, philosophy and art, literature and art, politics and art, and that where they existed these interactions are still at a very primitive level" (Lippard 1973: 295). In principle, it can be claimed that Lippard reasons that the very "notion" of "conceptual art", or the "dematerialization" of the "art object" by the artists themselves, can be seen as a malfunction of the whole phenomenon. This jibe by Lippard bears a resemblance to the characterisation of conceptual art as "Modernism's nervous breakdown" or "the homeless art of the culturally displaced" (Baldwin and Ramsden in Corris 2004: 1).

The general ignorance of the visual arts, especially their theoretical bases, deplorable even in the so-called intellectual world; the artists' well-founded despair of ever reaching the mythical "masses" with "advanced art"; the resulting ghetto mentality predominant in the narrow and incestuous art world itself, with its resentful reliance on a very small group of dealers, curators, critics, editors and collectors who are all too frequently and often unknowingly bound by invisible apron strings to the "real world's" power structure (Lippard 1973: 295).

In attempting to outline conceptual art's genesis and frame what it is, I wanted to start with a look at the writings from the 1960s, such as those of Le Witt, Kosuth and Lippard – although there are many more – because, as Godfrey (1998: 7) points out, “the issues were most fully developed and theorized by a generation of artists that emerged in the late 1960s, whose work must lie at the heart of any study of conceptual art”. Bringing conceptual art to the present time, as will be necessary for the progressing argument in this research, Godfrey (1998: 7) points out that “a new generation has adopted Conceptual strategies to elucidate their experience of the world. Whether we should see such work as late Conceptual, post-Conceptual or neo-Conceptual is as yet unresolved”. Moving on to the next section, it will be useful to borrow a question that Godfrey (1998: 7) raises, as this will serve as a key for the continued classification of this “wet bar of soap” (Goldie and Schellekens 2010: 9) termed “conceptual art”. Godfrey (1998: 7) asks the question: “If it is not defined by medium or style, how can you recognize a piece of Conceptual art when you encounter it?”. Godfrey (1998: 7) points how conceptual art can be identified:

Generally speaking, it may be in one of four forms: a *readymade*, a term invented by Duchamp for an object from the outside world which is claimed or proposed as art, thus denying both the uniqueness of the art object and the necessity for the artist's hand; an *intervention*, in which some image, text or thing is placed in an unexpected context, thus drawing attention to that context; e.g. the museum or the street; *documentation*, where the actual work, concept or action, can only be presented by the evidence of notes, maps, charts or, most frequently, photographs; or *words*, where the concept propositioning or investigation is presented in the form of language.

Moving on to the next sections of the chapter, it will be useful to take Godfrey's above “four forms” of identification, the readymade, intervention, documentation and words, but it will also be important to take into account his observation that “Many Conceptual works will not fit any clear typology, just as many conceptual artists resist any restrictive definition of what they do” (Godfrey 1998:10).

2.2 Conceptualism in contemporary African art: a brief mapping and understanding

I have endeavoured to define the term ‘conceptual art’ as well as frame ‘conceptualism’ in the last section, bearing in mind that “Symptomatically, there has never been a generally accepted definition of Conceptual art, though many have been proposed” (Godfrey 1998: 12). A continued attempt at branding and by extension territorialising a phenomenon as fluid as conceptualism may seem pointless and problematic but is nevertheless very necessary. Colin Richards’ 2002 essay provides a critical underpinning of the importance of branding and territorialisation. Richards (2002: 35) argues that:

. . . naming is important in another sense: as branding, territorialisation, cultural positioning. Tendencies, movements, the privileging of particular practices – painting, installation, performance, techno manic art – have become brands positioned in an increasingly commodified global art world. Such branding secures a constituency, a market, a critical and cultural capital, legitimacy, and gives discourse – writing on art – a point and a shape. That discursive point and shape secures for the art it captures a place in the public present and, if persistent enough public history.

Excerpts from Hassan and Oguibe’s catalogue for the exhibition *Authentic/ExCentric: Conceptualism in Contemporary African Art* and Colin Richards’ essay *The Thought Is the Thing* will at this stage be used as a continuation point. This section will look at ‘conceptualism’ within current art practice in Africa and its diasporas as the discourse narrows down to an examination of conceptualism in contemporary Zambian art production. As argued in the introduction of this thesis, there is a general gap in scholarly literature on contemporary art on the African continent but an even more identifiable lack of scholarly literature on contemporary art in Zambia and, by extension, conceptual art in Zambia. While the necessity of writing a local narrative of conceptual art may be questioned, a well-articulated note earlier elaborated by Richards (2002: 35) can be used to justify such a venture as he points out that “territorialisation” and “cultural positioning” among other sensibilities “secures a constituency, a market, critical and cultural capital, legitimacy, and gives discourse – writing on art – a point and a shape”.

It can also be argued that a ‘Zambian avant-garde’ does exist and has not been historicised or adequately documented, a task that still remains necessary as I had argued at the beginning of this chapter saying part of my goal is to fill in the gaps in terms of recording a “missing” history of contemporary Zambian art as well exert my own agency as a Zambian in recording and

analysing this history. While the purpose of Hassan and Oguibe's exhibition text is essentially to map conceptualism on the African continent, for this research it is also useful in that it too tries to continue with a definition of 'conceptual art', further providing an alternative interpretation to those provided by the previously-quoted authors. "Before any attempt to map the terrain of 'conceptualism' in contemporary African art a clarification of what we mean by 'conceptualism' or 'conceptual art' would be helpful" (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 10). Attempting to position conceptual art historically, Hassan and Oguibe (2001) propose that it "emerged in the last century" and suggest in much detail that it arose:

. . . from a long series of often unconnected and not altogether international acts and interventions in which artists elected or rejected certain forms or strategies in art making and in the process revised received understanding of the nature and essence of art. Because these interventions occurred in several different locations and precede the term itself, most recent historiographers of conceptual art admit that attempts to designate a firm genealogy or lineage can only be futile, or at best be viewed with scepticism. It is perhaps more helpful, therefore, to look instead at the different traits and characteristics that have come to be associated with conceptual art, at least in the west (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 10).

Nevertheless, among these "different traits and characteristics" of conceptual art, Hassan and Oguibe (2001) point out three main elements that are

. . . associated with conceptual art The first of these is self-reflexivity, by which the work of art turned upon itself and ultimately on the very notion of art Another element that has come to be associated with conceptual art is the disdain for objectness as *sine qua non*³³ and the move to what Lucy Lippard notoriously termed as dematerialization of the art object". In this regard, art ceases to be defined merely along the predictable lines of tangible and categorizable as either painting or sculpture (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 10-11).

They continue by pointing out that "A third crucial element or tendency in conceptual art is the pre-eminence of framing, whereby the placement of a work of art and the consequent context become more important to its meaning and significance than its form or its 'aesthetic qualities'"

³³ Sine qua non, noun, and a thing that is absolutely essential. – ORIGIN Latin, "without which not" (Oxford English Dictionary for students: 2005)

(Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 11). In a general definition that will be a continuously useful reference in the next few paragraphs, Hassan and Oguibe (2001:11) suggest that

Ultimately conceptualism becomes an umbrella term for the myriad of art practices and forms that go beyond painting and sculpture, including performance, video art, assemblage and installation as strategies of multi-media spectacle in which temporal and spatial dimensions as well as issues of the self and the body can be explored simultaneously. . . . In more ways than one, conceptual art has never been a monolithic practice or unified artistic discourse, but a contested field of multiple theoretical and practice positions.

Having briefly elaborated three crucial elements in conceptualism, or indeed conceptual art production, Hassan and Oguibe (2001:14) observe that “rarely any discussion of conceptualism and conceptual art practices has tried to map its terrain outside the west”. They suggest this, “with the exception” of the exhibition “Global Conceptual at the Queens Museum in New York, in which the attempt was made”. They argue that there has been no serious attempt or “effort to explore possible sources or origins of conceptualism outside the west”; they insist that an examination of “the non-Western world’s influence on conceptualism be explored strongly”, and that this should be done “in light of two considerations”. According to Hassan and Oguibe (2001: 14), “First it is obvious that certain strategies adopted by western conceptualists be it in performance art, installation, text-based art, use of the found object and the ephemeral were already evident in non-western artistic, philosophical and spiritual practices be they African, Asian, or Middle Eastern”. They continue by suggesting that “Second was the formal evidence, namely that these cultures integrated real life objects in art, contrary to the practice in the West where the artist was required to reproduce such objects, and not appropriate them” (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 14).

It must be noted, however, that what Hassan and Oguibe may be referring to as “art” from African cultures may not have constructed what has become to be termed as art, and the creators of these objects or “non-objects”³⁴. Fortunately, they do acknowledge this problem by indicating that “the fact that the status of these objects as art was radically thrown into oscillation by their translocation from the cultures and contexts of their provenance” (Hassan

³⁴ This is particularly so in the case of performance art

and Oguibe 2001: 14). Hassan and Oguibe also indicate that the Dada³⁵ group “further explored and eventually gave currency to the idea, and these would form precedence for conceptual art throughout the century to the present”. With this last statement the authors acknowledge that conceptual art is very much alive and being practised today, except one might argue that the conceptual art being practised today appears to be purely that which continues to primarily focus on self-reflexivity of the visual arts, and it can also be questioned whether this is necessary at all, seeing conceptual art has been fully integrated into the same gallery system it supposedly intended to rebel against since the creation of Duchamp’s *Fountain*. Has conceptual art not already been accepted as a dialect within the broad language of art as a medium of human expression? Nevertheless, before categorically looking at conceptualism in Africa, it would be sensible at this point, if not for historiographical reasons, to at least momentarily close the arguments of previously referenced authors (such as Kosuth) with one more insight into the contextual background of conceptual art in the west, again using Hassan and Oguibe (2001: 14-15), who submit:

Also, as Joseph Kosuth has noted conceptual art, at least in America, ‘is impossible to understand without understanding the sixties, and appreciate conceptual art for what it was: the art of the Vietnam War era. One may mention, also, that this was the era of annexation of Czechoslovakia, of student uprisings in France, and would eventually yield to the Peace and New Age movements. It also merged from the Civil Rights and Black Power movements which prepared the way and had far-reaching influence on many such movements and their choices of strategy. In questioning the authority of the state and other oppressive or dominant social and political institutions and roles during this era, the ‘non-West’ was readily available as a model and source for alternatives to the moral bankruptcy of Western capitalism. The heroism of Che Guevara, Frantz Fanon’s anti-colonial texts, and the numerous Third World liberation movements among other examples, inspired by radical thought and youth activism in the west. Beside intellectual and ideological influence, however, cultures outside the

³⁵ “An anarchic movement which flourished c.1915 - c.1922 and ridiculed traditional notions of form and beauty. Originally European, though it also took root in the Americas, it was partly born out of the disillusionment engendered by the First World War. The name was apparently chosen at random by inserting a penknife in the pages of a dictionary (‘Dada’ is French for ‘hobby-horse’). It was first used in 1916 - by the poet Tristan Tzara Traditional media such as painting and sculpture were abandoned in favour of techniques and devices such as collage, photomontage, and ready-mades. Chance was credited with a valid role in the act of creation. By the end of the war Dada had spread to a number of German cities such as Berlin, Cologne, and Hanover, but it also took root almost simultaneously in New York, independently of Europe. Its main practitioners were figures such as Duchamp, Picabia and Man Ray. Other centres of dada came to include Paris and Prague. Although it was short-lived, dada was highly influential and inspired many later anti-art movements in the course of the 20th century.” (Clarke and Clarke 2001: 73)

west also became sources of new ideas about life and the body, about fashion and music and spirituality. The use of the body in conceptual art drew considerably from these sources as did the Hippie movement in the 1960s, and later the Gay and Feminist movements in the 1970s and 1980s (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 14, 15).

“With the foregoing in mind”, Hassan and Oguibe (2001) declare that “conceptualism” in contemporary Africa art is in effect a “creative or critical strategy” that “establishes a firm link between contemporary and classical African art”, which again emphasises “the pre-eminence of idea over form”. Hassan and Oguibe suggest “many African artists are aware of this link and have drawn considerably from classical African art independent of whatever precedents were set by modernism” (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 15). The two authors also take the liberty of declaring conceptual art as a global movement and insist that “conceptual art by contemporary African artists is inseparable from this movement”. However, their subsequent assertion is problematic as they make a broad-stroke, all-inclusive supposition without considering locations such as Zambia, which is apparently out of their international line of sight. As will further be emphasised shortly, it must also be noted that international curators of African origin, such as Hassan and Oguibe and their contemporaries Okwui Enwezor and Simon Njami, have for some reason taken a great preference for selecting diaspora African artists whenever they are commissioned to set up shows; for instances where they use artists based on the continent, it is rare for them to seek out new names³⁶. There is a tendency to recycle the same artists such as Yinka Shonibare, a Briton of Nigerian descent, and Willem Boshoff of South Africa, both of whose work was included in *Authentic/Ex-Centric*, the exhibition for which Hassan and Oguibe edited the catalogue quoted here. Hassan and Oguibe (2001: 14) declare:

Not only were the artists conversant at every stage with trends and currents in conceptualism especially in the West, they have always been well versed in the languages and texts of conceptualism, post-modernism and related contemporary cultural discourses; for many, also conceptual practice had the same meaning and relevance as a departure from “tradition”, given that colonialism had created a rift between the past and the present within which languages of art making developed in Africa that were more akin to the old tradition in Europe, or to early modernism. The (re)turn to concept, therefore, was as radical and controversial as it was in the west, and

³⁶ It must be noted however that there is an indication that things are changing in present times as Enwezor’s recent Venice Biennale featured a continent based artist such as Ibrahim Mahama who lives and works in Tamale, Ghana, but may perhaps have been featured because of his overly conceptual inclination.

even today, in places like Egypt a gulf of mistrust still exists between an older generation of artists who remain adherents of modernism and younger artists who are interested in conceptualism strategies.

It can be argued that, whereas the predicament of discontinuation of particular languages in classical African art production may be evident in Zambia in line with Hassan and Oguibe's above observations (that concern the whole continent), it must also be reiterated that there is a severe generalisation by the authors that African artists have been "conversant at every stage with trends and currents in conceptualism"; this must be disputed as it does not ring true for Zambia. Perhaps the Zambian situation concerning conceptualism may feed more into what Hassan and Oguibe have aptly pointed out, that is, that "colonialism had created a rift between the past and the present within which languages of art making developed in Africa that were more akin to the old tradition in Europe" (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 15). This observation by the two authors appears to be in sync with what occurred in Zambia as can be seen in Chapter One, which pointed out at length the art practice in pre- and post-colonial³⁷ Zambia. Nevertheless, Hassan and Oguibe (2001: 15) attempt to give a historiographic mapping of conceptual art on the African continent and "make mention of a few instances and significant moments besides those covered" in a survey by Enwezor. They do, however, point out that "As with global conceptualism, it is difficult to trace a definite and accurate chronological account of conceptualism in Africa" (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 15). An abridged account of their listing is as follows:

By 1971 conceptualism had emerged in Sudan especially through the work of Muhammad Shaddad, co-founder of the Crystalist Group in Khartoum Shaddad employed shock tactics and other strategies that had become part of the conceptual vocabulary elsewhere. In 1978 Shaddad, his teacher Kamala Ishaq, and colleague Naila El Tayib issued the Crystalist Manifesto in which they outlined a new aesthetic that was also intended as a critique of the older generation of the Khartoum School As a demonstration of the Crystalists project, Shaddad held an exhibition in 1978, in which he exhibited piles of melting ice cubes surrounded by transparent plastic bags filled with coloured water. The immediate response to the Crystalists was mostly negative, especially by the older generation of Sudanese artists. They were dismissed as bohemian and not to be taken seriously.

³⁷ The period of the European settler-run Lusaka Art Society, particularly the late 1950s through to the late 1960s (see Cynthia Zukas Interview)

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Moroccan painter Zine Abdel Latif made performance paintings in which he danced over a spread canvases to accompaniment of religious music by Sufi mystics and Genawa musicians. He would dance himself into a trance and in this state he would splash and drip paint all over his canvas and his body. . . .

In Nigeria and Sudan in the 1970s and 1980s a few art students challenged dominant notions of art especially as produced in the academy. They denounced traditional institutions of art display as well as the distance between art and public which had become established in the post-colonial period. To put their ideas to practice they staged outdoor exhibitions in which makeshift barriers were used as hanging walls, or in cafes, restaurants and rural areas

In South Africa conceptualism was already evident in the 1970s in the work of artists like Willem Boshoff . . . and others such as Andries Botha. Although Botha's chosen medium earlier in his work was sculpture, he nevertheless employed it in an ideological engagement with the difficult socio-political atmosphere of his country, producing work that paid more attention to notions of freedom and bondage, both physical and mental, than to form or material value (Hassan and Oguibe 2001:15).

With the aforementioned, once again I assert the importance of a revisionist approach in the documentation of African art history, and I will therefore take the liberty to include the Zambian artist Martin Phiri to Hassan and Oguibe's list. The inclusion of Phiri to the chronology further consolidates that Africans and Zambians can assert their own agency in defining what and how they produce as artists. The next section also demonstrates that conceptualism is not entirely the domain of the West in any case, as Phiri, engaged with conceptualism in China, and not in Europe.

2.3 The Martin Phiri revolution and the rise of conceptualism in Zambia

As earlier indicated by Richards (2002), naming vis-à-vis "branding" and "territorialisation" of "tendencies" and "movements" and "the privileging of particular practices", among them "installation" and "performance", two typical attributes of conceptual art, as described by Godfrey earlier, "have become brands positioned in an increasingly commodified global art

world” (Richards 2002: 35). Of course this has all been mentioned earlier, but must be reiterated for the argument of this section. It is necessary to revisit these remarks here because it can be argued that conceptualism in Zambia has not been “branded” and has scarcely been “territorialised”, therefore its “constituency”, “market” and “legitimacy”, among other things, have not been extensively captured, written about or given discourse. Conceptualism in Zambia therefore has not had “That discursive point and shape” which “secures for the art” a “place in the public present and, if persistent enough, in public history” (Richards 2002: 35). It can be argued that this lack of “branding” or “territorialisation” of conceptual art in Zambia is one of the key factors that have led to a setback in the recognition of “Zambia” by the “global art world”. According to Richards (2002: 35), “This branding is produced by artists, art critics, adventurous art historians, philosophers; in art magazines, catalogues, monographs, institutions – in short, the whole panoply of texts, sites and institutions in which art practices are entangled”. The lack of “branding” or, in other words, documentation of conceptualism in contemporary Zambian art has in effect choked to the point that it is as if a conceptual impulse does not exist in Zambia; furthermore, it is in documentation that conceptual art finds an existence or, indeed, life, as Richards arguably points out that what “is really distinctive about conceptual art is that this textuality, siting, dissemination and institutional address are its means and materials. It is in this expanded field that the ‘idea’ – the central tenet of fundamentalist conceptualism – gets to breathe” (Richards 2002: 35). It can further be argued therefore that if “textually” and “institutional address” is where conceptual art gets to “breathe”, conceptual art has for years now been choked, as earlier discussed. Apart from scarce publication in academically-disposed art journals, such as *Nka*, or in paper presentations at roundtables, such as South African Visual Arts Historians conferences by Ruth Simbao, there has been very little documentation of conceptualism in Zambia. Besides Simbao’s efforts and a few rare attempts at documentation by the artists whose art has adopted a fundamentally conceptual attitude, as will be seen in this section and the next, conceptual art in Zambia has gone virtually undocumented. This section therefore intends to provide some documentation of conceptualism in contemporary Zambian art, if not to help it “breathe” and eventually come alive, “if persistent enough” (Richards 2002: 35). Nevertheless, with the aforementioned and with Hassan and Oguibe’s earlier listed, brief anthology of conceptualism on the African continent, it would be pertinent at this point to make a contribution to the dialogue and submit that, in Zambia, a historiographic framing of conceptual art practice in accordance with what the two authors termed the vocabulary of “global conceptualism” is possible, seeing that the periodization of this research is framed within the era of post-colonial Zambia it is therefore

manageable. It can safely be argued that conceptual art, or art production that encompasses any of the earlier mentioned vocabularies of conceptualism vis-à-vis the four forms listed by Godfrey: the “readymade”, the “intervention”, “documentation” and “words” have been practiced in Zambia within this period.

As much as Zambia may appear to be devoid of any manifesto-driven art movement comparable to the previously mentioned Crystalists of Sudan, Martin Phiri, an artist who died at the age of 40³⁸, can be said to have been the instigator of a “movement” that would culminate in the formation of the Zambia National Visual Arts Council (VAC), indefinitely re-configuring the environment of contemporary art practice in Zambia; a perceivable shift from the likes of the defunct Lusaka Art Society and the Art Centre Foundation before it. It can also be argued that Phiri is furthermore the “father” of conceptualism in contemporary Zambian art, particularly conceptualism that can fit into the categorisation of Godfrey. But before an examination of his seminal conceptual work the *Casket Series* (*Casket II* Figures 14 – 15), arguably the first conceptual piece involving video, sound, and made and found object installation exhibited in a Zambian gallery, it would be important to first look at his background and possible socio-political influences. Visual Arts Council of Zambia records indicate Phiri obtained a government scholarship for a BA Fine Art Degree in China in 1982 and returned to Zambia in 1987. According to the Lechwe Trust Catalogue (2009: 60), “Martin Abasi Phiri was a controversial artist in his own right. He was a shrewd leader trained in China [...] upon his return to Zambia he mobilized art students and fellow lecturers at the Evelyn Hone College to form the Zambia National Visual Arts Council VAC in 1987”. The catalogue also lists his students William Miko, Agnes Yombwe³⁹ and Harry Kamboni as co-founders. “Phiri was the Founding Chairman of what was to become many years later one of the strongest arts associations in this part of Africa. During his tenure at VAC he managed in his own militant style to spread the membership of VAC to most of Zambia’s provinces. . . . After his death in 1997, the Chipata branch of VAC in the eastern Province of Zambia decided to name its offices

³⁸ Source, Lechwe Trust Catalogue, Martin Abasi Phiri 1957 – 1997

³⁹ “Born Mazabuka, Zambia 1966, painter and sculptor. Received an Art Teachers Diploma from Evelyn Hone College, Lusaka 1989. A certificate in art and design from Wimbledon School of Art, London. Taught Art at Libala and Matero Boys Secondary schools in Lusaka. A founder member of the Zambia National Visual Arts Council (VAC). In the 1990s coordinated and facilitated women artists’ workshops at VAC, where she served as National Treasurer. Prolific and successful experimental artist who has won several awards. She has held several solo exhibitions. Undertaken prestigious studio residencies at the Edward Munch Studio in Oslo, Norway in 1995 and at the McColl Centre for Visual Art in North Carolina, USA in 2002. Has exhibited in many parts of the world and is currently living and working in Livingstone, Zambia where she runs a private Studio and Gallery called Wayi. Yombwe conducts weekend workshops for children in Livingstone.” (Lechwe Trust catalogue 2009: 81)

and studio after this great artist who played an important role in the formation of VAC” (Lechwe Trust Catalogue 2009: 60). An excerpt from the *Art Lives On* exhibition catalogue that further emphasises the progressive and industrious nature of Phiri’s character reads as follows:

The name VAC is synonymous with Martin Phiri. As genesis of the current development in art. Phiri always recounted how he and William B. Miko gate crushed [sic] and attended a ministerial meeting in 1987, held at Lechwe House in Freedom Way, chaired by the then Minister of State for Labour and Social Services late Hon. Lazarous Tembo. The meeting was held to discuss the adoption of cultural policy, but had no visual arts representation. The two gentlemen, requested they be given a month, in which to form a national body for visual arts. Phiri being a lecturer at Evelyn Hone College, William Miko being a student, mobilized two other fellow students: Agnes Buya Yombwe, Harry Kamboni and wrote invitation letters to all visual arts stake holders, and the first meeting which attracted more than 70 artists from across the nation gathered in room S 20, at Evelyn Hone College and VAC was born. This part of life remains his most illustrious, a colossal contribution to cement the current base of Zambian contemporary art (*Art Lives On* exhibition catalogue 2009: 10).

Looking at Phiri’s fervour portrayed above, it can be suggested that, upon his return from studies at the “Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing” (Ellison 2004: 112) in the mid-1980s, he may have returned home intellectually influenced by the new wave of forward thinking among artists and students which was at its peak in China at the time. This was periodized by leading Contemporary Chinese art scholar and curator Gao Minglu (2005: 042) as “The ’85 Movement”, a period “between 1985 and 1989” which followed

. . .the Pattern of a classic Chinese avant-garde movement established during the early part of the century. The activities of the artists consisted of group projects, searching for modernity, and various linguistic explorations It was a revolutionary breakthrough in every sense, whether of conceptual language or sociology of art (Gao Minglu 2005: 042).

Julia F. Andrews (2008: 32), in the text *Post-Mao, Postmodern*, published in the exhibition catalogue *Mahjong: Art Film and Change in China* edited by Julia M. White, describes the period as one of censorship, particularly in the arts. It should be noted that Yuan Yunsheng,

one of the most progressive Chinese artists of the period, did not only graduate from the same art academy as Phiri, although in the 1960s, but he taught there well into the mid-1990s. According to Andrews (2008: 32):

Central Academy of Fine Arts graduate and former Rightist Yuan Yunsheng is an uncompromising personality who pushed the art world from inside with a daring mural at the Beijing airport in 1980, only to have it boarded over. A group of amateur artists, the Stars (*Xingxing*), challenged it from outside. In September 1979, right before the national exhibition to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the P.R.C., the group hung their amateur oils, woodcuts, and sculptures, which included images of nudes and ruins, on the fence outside the China National Art Gallery (*Meishuguan*).

Andrews (2008:32) submits that “The Young Chinese, then, explicitly challenged the organizational structure of the party-controlled Chinese art world”, their “first show was, predictably, closed by authorities”. Andrews indicates that, although the government was beginning to take “tentative steps towards modernizing the economy, the party authorities in the early 1980s were reluctant to liberalize artistic expression” (Andrews 2008: 33). Andrews however points out that, despite these authoritarian conditions in communist China, “art institutions began acquiring publications about contemporary foreign art” (Andrews 2008: 33), and also “prohibitions of private experimentation were somewhat relaxed”. She identifies the library of the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts (now China Academy of Art) as an institution that “acquired a good collection of books and magazines on contemporary international art” (Andrews 2008: 33). Through the early 1980s, “interest in Western modernist and postmodernist work became a self-sustaining current within the student body, without being passed on from the faculty or school administration” (Andrews 2008: 33). Andrews emphasises that this period was unquestionably a time of change and revolution, although there are indications that there appeared to be a constant back and forth shift, with authorities continuously loosening or tightening their grip on authority. Andrews (2008: 33) states that this “new atmosphere in the art world resulted at least in part from changes being made throughout the Chinese bureaucracy in 1985”. Deng Xiaoping, who was the paramount leader of China at the time, was positively predisposed towards youth empowerment and in a speech a year earlier he had

. . . declared the particular importance of promoting talented young people into administrative positions; other party leaders called for creative freedom. If young artists, particularly those in the art academies, had already begun experimenting in international forms of art, it is not surprising, given the comparatively liberal tone of official writings in 1985, that the new art and the critics who sought to explain it garnered sufficient institutional support to bring these new forms of art into the light. An official art conference, held at Huang Shan in Anhui in April of 1985, began the process of redefining official standards of art (Andrews 2008: 33).

It can be argued that the conference was in itself a cultural watershed in that it would bring about concepts and freedoms that may have never otherwise been contemplated at the height of communism in China. Participants of the conference “concluded that politics should be abandoned as the purpose of art and that the bonds of a narrow ‘national style’ be broken so that artists might pursue an international idiom, and that Mao’s rejection of modernism be reconsidered” (Andrews 2008: 33). In November of the same year, the China National Art Gallery “agreed to rent its space to the American Pop artist Robert Rauschenberg . . . such a show would not have been permitted in earlier times, for even in the early 1980s classic western abstract art had been a cause for dispute between American and Chinese curators” (Andrews 2008: 33). Just as Andrews does, Tidings Chan⁴⁰ points out that Rauschenberg did play a pivotal role in influencing the mind-set as well as the media of young Chinese artists. The Rauschenberg exhibition was part of the artist’s *Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Initiative (ROCI)*, whose purpose was to travel “to a country which may not be familiar with contemporary western artists, to interact with the artists and artisans there, to learn their aesthetic traditions, to make work in their settings, to talk to students, to touch on every aspect of art . . .” (Chan 2010: 54). Chan also specifies that it was “fitting that China, with its firm grip on artists’ evolution and work, would be considered apt for the *ROCI* tour”. According to Andrews, the Rauschenberg exhibition “had a profound impact on young Chinese artists who strove to work in an international language” (Andrews 2008: 34). Chan submits that Rauschenberg’s initiative “was a catalyst/source of reflection in the evolution of Modern Chinese art from Soviet-inspired socialist realism to more Avant-garde modes of expression” (Chan 2010: ii). Outlining the scale of the exhibition and its extraordinary scope, Chan also provides elaborate statistics which give an indication that “nine thousand people came to the

⁴⁰ Tidings Chan. *His Chinese Legacy: Robert Rauschenberg’s Impact and Influence in Post 1985 Chinese Contemporary Art and Art Policy* (thesis for Master of Arts and Liberal Studies, Georgetown University Washington, D.C. 2010)

China National Art Gallery in Beijing on its opening day . . . before the show's end a month later, more than three hundred thousand people had seen *ROCP*" (Chan 2010: 71) and that it was an "audience hungry for western information"; also "one Chinese university brought its entire art department to Beijing for a month to study the exhibit" (Chan 2010: 71). It is worth noting that, although the Rauschenberg exhibition is agreed to have had a progressive impact on Chinese artists, particularly students and arts scholars, his works were received more critically: "Many foreigners, like many Americans, were puzzled or offended by it. Some Chinese viewers, according to press accounts, were critical of the notion that cardboard boxes were 'art'" (Chan 2010: 71). Classified as one of the leading figures in the "pop art" genre alongside Andy Warhol (Clarke and Clarke 1999 / 2001: 195), much of Rauschenberg's work fits into all the four forms of "conceptual art" earlier mentioned by Godfrey (1998: 7), and key among these elements in Rauschenberg's work was the "readymade". However, as already indicated, it is not all groups of Chinese viewers that were receptive of this type of work, as Chan points out that "It must be clear that Rauschenberg's art was not wildly received by all" (Chan 2010: 71). Andrews also points out that some local viewers of the exhibition may have been "unsympathetic" because Rauschenberg's "use of local objects" had "no deeper cultural significance than a sort of tourist souvenir". In a synopsis of the Rauschenberg exhibition's influence on the Chinese artists, Andrews (2008) suggests that it motivated them towards the use of ready-mades, for instance:

Within a few weeks of seeing the exhibition, artists of the Three-Step Studio in Taiyuan, Shanxi, attempted to hold an exhibition that involved found objects from their locale. Although the exhibition was closed by the authorities, it became known to the Chinese art world through published photographs of the installation. During the following year, quite a number of young painters began experimenting with installations. The national art press, who's recently hired young critics were extremely ambitious in promoting the open-door policies, avidly published descriptions and reviews of these shows (Andrews 2008: 33).

Andrews (2008) recounts the continued "on-again, off-again liberalization" that transpired across all sectors of communist China's society, although after it ". . . ended only in the bloody events of June 1989, in Tiananmen Square, this exhilarated period of artistic liberalism and experimentation was pushed underground for a period of almost three years. Many artists fled overseas; others turned inward" (Andrews 2008: 35). Xu Bing, who was the first artist to mount

an exhibition at the China National Art Gallery in 1988 which had hosted *ROCI* three years earlier, is remembered for an installation work *Book from the Sky*, with “hand-printed texts using his unintelligible lexicon of fake characters” (Andrews 2008: 34). This work, obviously considered unusual at the time, possessed both the “documentation” and “words” classification of conceptual art as highlighted above. Andrews (2008: 34) recounts:

Xu Bing once suggested to me that a factor in the extraordinary creativity of artists of his generation was what they didn't know. For them, graduating from art school in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the world outside China's creaky gate was one of absolutely limitless possibility, one they could only imagine, and one that they conceived as a realm of total creative independence.

It can be claimed, therefore, that Phiri acquired a revolutionary disposition as a young student in China. He was in the midpoint of his studies when “The Young Chinese, then, explicitly challenged the organizational structure of the party-controlled Chinese art world” (Andrews 2008: 33). Consequently, Phiri may have been motivated to challenge the existing art administration system that he found upon returning home; he may have also felt excluded by Mpapa Gallery, the sole art space – with all its worthy effort and intentions, which clearly already had its own favourites, as seen in Chapter One. Within the same vein, Phiri may have been like other artists on the African continent who believed “conceptual practice had the same meaning and relevance as a departure from ‘tradition’, given that colonialism had created a rift between the past and the present within which new languages of art making developed in Africa that were more akin to the tradition in Europe or to early modernism” (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 15). Art language “akin to the tradition in Europe or to early modernism”, as earlier indicated, was the accepted norm within Zambian circles. Phiri, himself a youth in his 20s who had been awarded a Zambia–China scholarship immediately after completing secondary school (Miko 2015), may have also been one of the many students who had visited Rauschenberg's *ROCI* at the China National Art Gallery, and could have had contemporaries among the many young Chinese artists who had started experimenting with new vocabularies of art-making, such as ready-mades and installations, and may have himself experimented in it. Phiri could have therefore found the painting- and sculpture-oriented art scene in Zambia restrictive and perhaps archaic, and this may have lead him to iconoclastically create works considered radical, such as the *Casket Series*, not only to challenge accepted notions of artistic expression but also to interrogate the general perceptions of a conservative public in Kenneth Kaunda's neo-

socialist one-party state. One of his former Evelyn Hone College students and subsequent co-founder of VAC, William Miko, who is currently in possession of one of the works, *Casket II*, remembers Phiri as a “soft spoken person whose radicalism came out through his actions of engaging the community, government and society at large” (Miko: 2015). Miko (2015) submits that “it was through his (Phiri’s) fearless approach” that he achieved a lot. “Martin Abasi Phiri was very radical in his expression of ideas, most of which were political or highly controversial in nature. He was a well-trained sculptor, who spoke better Chinese than English. He was very courageous and brave” (Miko: 2015). Elaborating on the controversial *Casket Series*, Miko explains:

The *Casket Series* was made between 1993 and 1995, these pieces of artworks were eye catching and mind blowing. For example, *Casket II* was made out of florescent light tube covers. They were welded into an adult full coffin sized casket shaped with a proper small window with which an upward movable cover for viewing the face of a corpse is allowed – just like real caskets are designed. MAP went on to cast his own face using plaster of Paris and placed it inside well wrapped in a white cloth just as a funeral parlour prepares a dead body for a funeral service. He touched up the facial cast with some oil paints to achieve the real complexion of a dead body and made it look so real as a dead body’s face lying down in that coffin ready for body viewing. This face was exactly his own (Miko 2015).

Although predating the 2001 fringe exhibition *Authentic/Ex-Centric: Conceptualism in Contemporary African Art* at the Venice Biennale, Phiri’s *Casket II* possesses a similar visual vocabulary to that of the four artists featured in the show, namely Berni Searle, Zineb Sedira, Hassan Musa and Olu Oguibe. In particular, Phiri’s work speaks to Hassan and Oguibe’s notion of “insertion”, a term that they suggest in the essay “embraces multiple layers of meanings” but that also “refers to the complex manner in which” the “artists ‘insert’ images of their bodies into their work” (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 26). Phiri’s work also conforms to the notion that artists “interrogating the social constructions of the body within their own cultures may take precedence in their work over what has come to be known in contemporary discourse as ‘returning the gaze’” (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 26). According to Miko (2015), since Phiri was also “such a good portrait painter in oils, it was not difficult for MAP to achieve the African dead body textural likeness”, meaning when the work was just made it would have borne his exact, life-like portrait in the coffin; in other words, a realistic self-portrait. “Phiri went on to

make a video of people as mourners most of the footage he captured from funerals of past relatives. Most of the footage was showing women moving past the coffin, looking down in the coffin, the part where mourners view the body and walking past it, bursting in to tears and crying. Included amongst the women mourners was his own wife” (Miko: 2015). That said, Phiri had in effect made his wife a widow, which could be considered a taboo, furthermore, the video of a mourning wife may also be seen as an unkind to his wife. These two observations again gesture to another proposition by Hassan and Oguibe concerning the artists of *Authentic/Ex-Centric* that also speaks to Phiri’s work: although it was not a performance piece in the strictest sense, all the other characteristics of the piece are in tune. “As performance artists they deploy all art activities that incorporate time and motion, often using video, music or theatre to emphasize the visual as transitory and responsive phenomena. Like most post-modern artists’ deconstruction of cultural mythology, stereotype and accepted social norms of role playing are central to their art practices” (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 26). According to Miko (2015), “This video piece was placed and played in front of the *Casket II* for viewers to see it as part of the installation in a gallery space” (Miko 2015). Miko’s following account of the piece further indicates that Phiri did indeed “deconstruct” “cultural mythology, stereotype and accepted social norms” (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 27). Miko (2015) recounts:

And, whenever Martin was asked why he had done that piece of artwork and video, his answer was simply that “I wanted to see how I would look like in a coffin when I pass on and see how people will mourn me”. In further discussions with him, Martin exerted a lot of his ability to challenge established norms – this was his focus. Most importantly, he wanted to challenge mankind’s harboured inherent notion and fears surrounding death. This fearless and bold courage to put such artworks in front of the audience did not sit very well with some people in society with beliefs in taboos and witch craft, but it was a real thrill for most of us in the creative sector who adored his expressiveness. Unfortunately, he died in 1997, I had just left Zambia for further studies in London, UK.

Miko also specifies that the generally-accepted belief until this day is that Phiri’s work was a harbinger of his death and, had he not done it, he may still be alive; this further links the artist’s work to the concept of challenging mythological stereotypes and perhaps strengthening them by “succumbing” to an attempt to do so. But, regardless of its reception among a Zambian audience, it can be argued that Phiri’s work was by no means restricted to a Zambian public as

“he wanted to challenge mankind’s harboured inherent notion and fears surrounding death” (Miko 2015). Phiri’s *Casket I* also incorporated ready-mades in its execution. The work was inspired by events that took place in Phiri’s youth before he left for studies in China. Miko (2015) describes it as:

A metal sculpture made out of scrap metals from actual discarded military vehicles and actual bomb shells. These pieces of artworks were inspired by his (Phiri’s) own personal witness of the white rebels bombing of a bridge in Chongwe town area. These white rebels were hired mercenaries from unliberated countries such as Southern Rhodesia now Zimbabwe and South Africa, who were hired to destabilise Zambia’s economic infrastructure, by bombing them to silence her and make her cow down and refrain from supporting the liberation of Southern African countries. Many lives were lost including some of the attackers themselves. Martin remembered how, one afternoon, as he was seated on the veranda of his brother’s house, who was a school teacher. On this particular incident in the 1980s, Martin saw a white rebel mercenary, clad in all sorts of military regalia, crossed the bridge to the Western side and started booby-trapping the pillars of the Chongwe bridge with bombs. After finishing as he ran back across the same bridge, the bombs went off and he was blown up with the bridge. What followed were further tragedies; speeding trucks and other vehicles from Eastern Province started falling in the river as the bridge was no longer in place. Later in the years to come, Martin went to revisit the place and picked the debris from many years earlier and made this sculpture in memory of this horrifying incident he witnessed.

Nevertheless, despite works such as the *Casket Series*, it must be mentioned that Phiri was well versed in the “tradition” of modernist art practice, as can be seen in his earlier works such as live model drawings from his student days in the mid-1980s (Figure 16); his expertise in sculpture can also be seen in works such as the politically-charged *Tukaba bwino kuntashi* (Figure 17), a work whose title Miko (2015) explains is

. . . a Bemba saying which literally translates as ‘our life will be better in future’. This is a stone marble sculpture of a bust with a blindfold. This sculpture was a commentary on politicians as cheats who are always telling the people that they should vote for them and if they do, life will be better in future.

Although formalist in visual language, this work too shows Phiri’s conceptual aptitude in that it possesses an idea that permeates an ornamental aesthetic. It feeds into the notion about conceptual art that “Seen one way, it is an aesthetic orthodoxy permeating almost all

contemporary art practices” (Richards 2002: 34) and also that “Experienced intensely enough, almost all art of ambition becomes ‘conceptual’ in unavoidable ways. So the ‘conceptual’ is mutable, almost all that we do when we make art” (Richards 2002: 40). Nevertheless, moving on to other Zambian artists who have adapted and continued to use a more radical conceptual vocabulary, it will be important to reiterate that Martin Phiri ought to be acknowledged as the pioneer of conceptualism in contemporary Zambian art. Miko proposes that with the *Casket Series* “It can be said that, in contemporary art terms in the Zambian art development of the past decades, *Casket II* was the first performance and video installation art piece ever to have been made by an artist in Zambia” (Miko: 2015).

2.4 Conceptualism in Zambia after Phiri’s *Caskets*

Conceptual art as a practice did not immediately flourish after Phiri; however, it would re-emerge towards the late 1990s and early 2000s, particularly among artists who, like Phiri, experienced international exposure through workshops and training within the African continent and Europe. Key among them are Lutanda Mwamba, David Chirwa, Victor Mutelekesha, Baba Jakeh Chande, Kalinosi Mutale and Anawana Haloba. An exploration of their individual works suggests that it ascribes to Hassan and Oguibe's notions of “insertion”; it is “influenced by ideas of performance art, the works of these artists have been primarily motivated by the quest for self-representation, interrogation of their own existential circumstances, or the negotiation of their identity” (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 26). Also, “their bodies or images of their bodies have become the preferred medium on which art is created or inscribed into the work” (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 27), and furthermore this “use of the body”, as well as “ritualism, masquerade and shrine-like aura”, has found itself into their works. The former is particularly true of the works of Mwamba, Chande, Haloba and Mutelekesha, while the latter relates to the work of Chirwa and Kalinosi, as will be pointed out. An attempt at a periodised mapping of conceptualism in contemporary Zambian art after Martin Phiri can arguably start with one of Haloba’s performances. In the Autumn 2007 Edition of *Art South Africa*, in an article entitled *Speaking in Tongues*, Simbao (2007b: 53), recounts that Haloba did a “series of performances . . . in Lusaka in 1999, where she spread sugar, salt and crushed clay mixed with chili powder onto different pieces of paper and then used her tongue to forge meandering pathways creating cartographic-like drawings” (Figure 8). It can be argued that Haloba’s performance, despite unfriendly reactions from the Zambian audience – which will be pointed out by Simbao, was a success in that it was able to be “documented” by scholars such as Simbao, particularly because, as earlier suggested by Richards, conceptual art finds

‘breath’ when written on or documented. In other words, to draw a parallel with the words of Lippard, the work was able to navigate “The general ignorance of the visual arts, especially their theoretical bases, deplorable even in the so-called intellectual world; the artists’ well-founded despair of ever reaching the mythical ‘masses’ with ‘advanced art’ (Lippard 1973: 295), and also permeating the “resentful reliance on a very small group of dealers, curators, critics, editors and collectors” (Lippard 1973: 295). A year later, in 2000, “Haloba produced an installation that likewise challenged the Zambian press” (Simbao 2007b: 53). The installation entitled *Newspaper Toilet* was placed at the Henry Tayali Gallery in Lusaka. According to Simbao, in *Newspaper Toilet* Haloba “created a private space within the gallery, covered a ceramic toilet with newspapers and filled the bowl with horseshit. She invited the public to come and use it as they would any other toilet” (Simbao 2007b: 53). Simbao (2007b: 53) goes on to submit that this was “a bold gesture in an art context that had little understanding of conceptual art”. Simbao’s observation conceivably suggests that five years after Phiri’s *Casket Series*, conceptual art still had not caught on with the Zambian audiences. Possibly in a continued effort to investigate the perceptions of conceptual art in Zambia, in 2002, Simbao organised a workshop in Lusaka and invited Zambian artists to participate, and among them was Haloba (Figure 18 - 19). Concerning the workshop and Haloba’s contribution to it, Simbao (2007b: 53) writes:

In the 2002 performance art workshop *Tafipelela*, which I organised in Lusaka, a number of artists were encouraged to produce street interventions as a way of ascertaining public responses to art that did not fit into the conservative Zambian art scene. Haloba calmly posted controversial newspaper headlines onto the outside wall of a public toilet in the middle of a busy downtown market. The headlines – “Mwanawasa’s govt is rotten” and “How MMD Rigged polls” – directly condemned the current president and governing party, causing one onlooker to angrily break through the crowd and rip the newspapers from the wall, taking the termination of the performance into his own hands.

After 2002, Haloba would once again set up another performance in Lusaka, which is arguably her last production in a Zambian gallery space before permanently settling in Europe. It can be argued that Haloba’s work at this point had established a discursive “point and shape” and, according to Richards, these are essential ingredients for the success of conceptual art because this “discursive point and shape secures for the art it captures a place in the public present and, if persistent enough, in public history” (Richards 2002: 35). It can be suggested that this “persistence” afforded Haloba the opportunity to exhibit on important platforms such as

Dak'art Biennale 2006 and the 53rd International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, the latter for which she remains the only Zambian to have exhibited. Nonetheless, "In 2003 . . . she produced an exhibition in Lusaka with Zambian artist Kalinosi Mutale entitled *Konse Kubili*, which means both ways, juxtaposing conceptual/installation art well-known in Europe alongside two-dimensional prints more readily accepted in Zambia" (Simbao 2007b: 53). This earned her a review in the Fall 2007 edition of *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*. It is in this review that Simbao indicates the acrimony towards conceptual art in Zambia. Simbao however indicates that the inhospitality to the artist's work was not only from local viewers but the expatriate community, who in essence hold sway over art production in Zambia; the observation highlights the challenges faced by conceptual Zambian artists. Simbao (2007a: 124) writes:

Presented in Lusaka to a largely Zambian audience, *Konse Kubili* addresses the fact that Zambian artists who travel and study abroad often struggle to locally exhibit conceptual and installation art, as these works are often perceived to be too European. As Haloba asserts, 'we thought this exhibition would be another way of responding to those that say that when you go to Europe you forget the real art . . . and start to do what the Europeans are doing, which you can't even sell. We are trying to tell them we haven't stopped what we are doing . . . we can't forget but we also have new ideas'.

Unfortunately, the European and American donor and diplomatic community in Zambia plays a significant role in determining what 'real Zambian art' should be, as it makes up a large portion of art consumers in a context of meagre financial support. Many exhibitions in Lusaka take place in the homes of expatriates and, as Zambian artist William Bwalya Miko says, 'too many paintings are bought to match the home furnishings of unenlightened buyers who assume a position of connoisseurship'.

A further indication that the foreign Euro-American community holds sway over the Zambian art scene is an observation by Fall (2003) who insightfully gives a description of it and highlights the predicament of foreign agency as she points out:

The Art community has its own rules. In many countries, the power of the art scene is in the hands of art producers, curators, publishers and gallery owners who encourage the development of people's critical mind, give an artistic and financial value to art and sometimes shape the taste of the public. In Zambia, the power seems to be in the hands of 'art lovers' of whom I wonder if they don't like images of Africa more than art from Africa. When art works become exotic fruits, remaining an 'authentic' Africa out of

time, then we are no longer talking about art but about fantasy and obsession. (Fall 2003:9)

Again as has been indicated by the artists mentioned in this chapter, not all Zambian artists have succumbed to these notions of ‘Africaness’ to inform their work. In relation to this, Simbao (2007a: 124) argues however that, *Konse Kubili* was an important exhibition in that “it not only flies in the face of amateurs that have posited themselves as the guardians of ‘Zambian art’ but also takes seriously the perspectives of a local audience. It offers viewers in Lusaka both the expected (two-dimensional works on paper) and the unexpected (a sound installation and ephemeral drawings on the gallery walls)” (Figure 20). In a later article entitled *The Aftermath of Deterritorialization: Victor Mutelekesha and Contemporary Zambian art in the Wake of Diaspora*, Simbao re-visited a mention of the *Konse Kubili* audience, further indicating the varied combination of individuals in the crowd and stating:

The exhibition attempted to address two audiences: an audience in Zambia that largely prefers conventional prints, paintings or sculptures, and an academically trained art audience that welcomes conceptual installations and multi-media works. (And because there is no university level art education in Zambia, academically trained professionals within the country are extremely rare). It would, however, be a misnomer to label the audience in Zambia simply as ‘local,’ for audiences also consist of international donors and NGO workers who often perpetuate the production of stereotypical African sculptures and paintings that are framed as ‘traditional’ (Simbao: 2008b).

The aforementioned scenario provides further currency to the notion that it is in documentation that conceptual art can “breathe”, regardless of the “hostility” of the viewing crowd. But it would be in order, if only for the sake of a historiographic sequence of events, to look at the works of another prominent figure in conceptualism in Zambia, Lutanda Mwamba. Before his death in 2014, Mwamba was particularly known as a printmaker on the Zambian art scene. Like Phiri, who was 10 years his senior, he too received an extensive amount of training abroad (although not to university degree level), particularly in the United Kingdom and Jamaica, where he would later teach⁴¹. Mwamba would become co-founder of what could be considered

⁴¹ “After he founded the Rockston Studio along with Chirwa in 1985 – which developed into an informal art school – his skills and ideas would greatly influence the course of the next 15 years from the late 1980’s through to the early 2000s until the studio packed in. He would become not only the coach but guru of some of the country’s most illustrious artists of their generation Although Mwamba studied print making at Evelyn Hone College in Lusaka and Reading University in the United Kingdom – in 1989 he was the only artist from Africa to be awarded a prestigious Commonwealth Foundation Fellowship – and also went on to teach print making at Edna Manley School of Art, Kingston, Jamaica, he tutored most of the Rockston flock in the principles of art and stone sculpture, although his passion remained in printmaking

another shift or movement in the Zambian art landscape through his involvement with Rockston Studio, a group of young Zambian artists who mainly produced stone sculptures. It can be argued that Mwamba was the key proponent of conceptual art during the early *Insaka* International Artists Workshops that were briefly mentioned in Chapter One. For the 2003 session of the workshop, Mwamba, along with South African artist Norman O’Flynn, created what appears to have been the highpoint of the workshop and which would inspire conceptualism in many *Insaka* workshops to come. *Insaka* 2003 produced a catalogue which briefly highlights the work (see Figures 21 – 24). The catalogue states: “Together with Norman O’Flynn and Zenzele Chulu he did a series of performances, body print, *nyaminyami* lunch, ritual Norman O’Flynn represented South Africa well with his body print performance with roommate Lutanda. Both print makers, this was by far the most contemporary performance, thanks to photographers Leonard Musabula and Ann Marie Curran for they captured the scenes as they happened. Body print session became a beacon of other performances to develop within the workshop” (Insaka Artists Catalogue 2003: 16, 22).

As earlier stated, Mwamba and O’Flynn’s piece speaks to Hassan and Oguibe’s notions of “insertion”, vis-à-vis the self – or the body. The artists on several occasions painted themselves blue and in certain instances transferred the colour onto canvas using their bodies. Mwamba and O’Flynn similarly drape themselves in the colour in perhaps a symbolic interrogation of authority or hegemony. While the performance may not have garnered the opportunity for the indispensable academic documentation – which is one of the purposes of this research – it was given the opportunity to “breathe” among the participating artists of the workshop. As the catalogue indicates, the work “became a beacon of other performances to develop within the workshop” (2003: 22), inspiring other notable works such as Mwamba’s performance *Nyami-Nyami lunch*, with his protégé and Rockston member Zenzele Chulu, who in turn created *Cross Border* (Figure 25), while Sylvia Mwando performed *Initiation* (Figure 26). The *Insaka* booklet states that

Cross Border is the most outstanding work for Zenzele, he derived his concept from beach volleyball were [sic] the material cloth was painted in schematic style and hanged as a volley ball net between two poles. Simply the people did not realize that they were

In which ever material his themes were mainly social but because of his amoebic nature there was no pinpointing him in terms of style as he was always investigating new methods, media and genres expressing them in his own visual vocabulary, however, throughout his career colour remained important. He applied this to an astounding mastery of technique and control of materials.” (Andrew Mulenga’s *Hole in the Wall*, *The Post Newspaper*: 10 May 2014).

part of the material for this art work, the interactive nature of playing volleyball attracted different people other than artists, to participate in the art process (2003: 26).

Although it will not be discussed at length, it can be suggested that the work, an interactive “installation”, is also a typical example of an “intervention”, as non-artists took part in the performance, while the artist’s occasional participation amounts to “insertion”. The *Insaka* 2003 workshops, conducted in the holiday resort town of Siavonga on the shores of Lake Kariba, provided a very conducive space for Zambian artists to experiment with conceptualism, as part of the workshop structure demanded that participating artists use as many “found objects” or “ready-mades” as they could, as a means of encouraging creative initiative. The catalogue indicates Mwamba was at the forefront of this reintroduced conceptual direction on to the Zambian art scene a decade after Phiri’s *Casket Series*.

A year later, in 2004, Mwamba’s childhood friend, contemporary and co-founder of Rockston Studios, Chirwa⁴² departed from his usual “formalist” stone sculptures when making a contribution to the exhibition *Transitions*⁴³ that culminated from the Triangle Workshops⁴⁴. The *Transitions* exhibition catalogue indicates that, while Chirwa contributed three formalist sculptures to the exhibition (Figure 27), he also provided a mixed-media conceptual piece. Laura Henderson (2005: 29), a UK-based gallerist and art historian, interviewed Chirwa in London for the catalogue, where she indicates:

Chirwa classifies his 1990s works as ‘object-based’. Abstract in form, their inspiration is drawn from the tradition of his ancestors. But he emphasises that these sculptures are about the objects associated with ritual or custom – they are not about ritual itself. In these works, the aesthetic is paramount. Concept and narrative are implied and secondary.

Concerning his departure into more conceptual work, Henderson (2005: 29) writes that “Chirwa’s current concerns are to lead African art away from its existing representation – to produce conceptual work that is uniquely African, informed by the rich tradition and custom and ritual across the continent” (Henderson 2005: 30). Henderson gives a detailed account of

⁴² “Born 1968, Copperbelt, Zambia. 1981, Gallery Assistant at Mpapa Gallery. Past Treasurer of Zambian National Visual Arts Council. 1985 formed a gallery / studio called Rockston. 1989/90, worked as apprentice to Lutanda Mwamba. Well-travelled, attending workshops, exhibitions and residences in America, Europe, Africa. Currently Director of Rockston Studios and Gallery, Lusaka, an informal art school for young and upcoming artists.” (Lechwe Trust Collection Catalogue: 2009: 15).

⁴³ “*Transitions* is an exhibition about what happens when opportunities for art making are opened up to people whose social, political and educational environment had seemed hitherto to have denied them such opportunities” (Picton 2004 :7)

⁴⁴ “Triangle Workshops, originated by British art collector and entrepreneur Robert Loder and sculptor Sir Antony Caro in 1982 . . . the first African Triangle Workshop, Thupelo, was organized in South Africa by artists David Koloane and Bill Ainslie.

Chirwa's opinion on the approach that African artists should take towards conceptualism as well as an insight into his conceptual work entitled *Third World Illusion* (Figures 28 – 29). Henderson (reference) writes:

If Africans took up the challenge of creating idea based work it could not be borrowed by the west. It would be conceptual and Africans would understand it better than the west because it is our tradition. Let's rise to the challenge and try and match the west with its ideas. We have ideas to use – they are abstract – but stuff goes on in Africa which is a way of life.

Chirwa's recent work, fuelled by these beliefs, disregards his 'object-based' sculpture in preference for conceptual installations: 'Now I prefer to make a statement – sometimes political, sometimes social or emotional. What matters most in the work is what you are saying.' *Third World Illusion*, displayed in this exhibition, is one such work which Chirwa describes as based on the perception of the "glamorous" west by *Third World* citizens. The concerns at play in this work are also prominent in other recent installations in which human behaviour and cultural differences are concerned.

Chirwa is passionate about the direction that African art should take and is reluctant to dwell on this past work.

Unlike the previously explored works, Chirwa's *Third World Illusion* does not involve "insertion" and is an installation created entirely from ready-mades and found objects. It does however involve the artist's "craftsman" hand, not only in the creation of the buildings in the cityscape but also in the collage, and the text that appears almost randomly placed and written on these buildings. Other than being "based on the perception of the 'glamorous' west" and on "human behaviour and cultural differences" (Henderson 2004: 29), the work also speaks of Hassan and Oguibe's notions, and can be said to be an "interrogation of" the artist's "own existential circumstances" (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 26), in that where Africa feeds the exotic fantasies of a "jungle", Chirwa, an artist from Africa sees the western metropolis – or any other for that matter – as a "concrete jungle" of high-rise buildings where none of its inhabitants is concerned about the other. Nevertheless, contrary to the zeal shown by Chirwa above, it can be pointed out that, upon returning to Zambia the same year, he again returned to his "object-based" or "formalist" stone sculpture at Rockston Studio. Because Chirwa's *Third World Illusion* was well captured and "documented" in the *Transitions* catalogue it is one of the few pieces that is enabled to "breathe" in the conceptual discourse in contemporary Zambian art.

One of the leading apprentices to come out of Rockston Studios, Baba Jakeh Chande⁴⁵, who was a student of both studio founders, Chirwa and Mwamba, is another artist who would completely abandon stone sculpture after immigrating to Helsinki in Finland, where he experienced rising prominence for his performance pieces before his untimely death at the age of 42 in 2014⁴⁶.

On the Helsinki art scene, he was known more for his performance pieces than sculptures because this is a trait he had long developed before moving to Europe. While at the Rockston Studios in Lusaka, he was always staging spontaneous pieces at times during gallery exhibitions He is particularly remembered for the performance piece *Awaiting Revelation* in which he stripped and covered himself in stretched mutton cloth from head to toe revealing only his waist-long dreadlocks (*Saturday Post*, Zambia: 1 March, 2014).

Like Chirwa, Chande was very adept with formalist sculpture that was informed by abstract nuances; he had an affinity for reducing coarse marble – his preferred medium – into delicate forms such as can be seen in the works *Endangered Species* and *Torso* (Figure 30). *Endangered Species* is an abstraction of an elephant head emphasising the ears and trunk, while *Torso* appears to represent an androgynous play on both male and female organs, with shapes representing both the female torso or representing the phallic, depending on the angle at which the work is looked at. An examination of his performance fully subscribes to Hassan and Oguibe's notions of "insertion", as Chande's body was his "preferred medium on which art is created or inscribed into the work" (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 27); however, the artist did not necessarily subscribe to portraying his exact likeness as he had a tendency to cover, his face in reference to "ritualism, masquerade". In Figures 31 and 32, he can be seen with his face fully covered in elasticated striped cloth vigorously dancing to the beat of the drum; this is not unlike the traditional *Makishi* masquerades of North Western Zambia whose performers are also covered in elasticated striped cloth covering the face. The artist's dreadlocked hair also played an integral part in his work; January 12, 2011:

⁴⁵ "Baaba Jakeh Chande is a performance artist and sculptor originating from Zambia, living in Finland. His artistic production currently ranges from performance to site-specific installations, environmental works and sculpture. Recent work, performances in particular, is influenced by change, the contrasts and similarities he encounters in the two lifestyles he has, Zambian and Finnish. He uses materials that are directly connected to daily human life to evoke memories around personal or collective histories, tragedies and hopes. His body and dreadlocks are the embodiment of his life but he also uses them as framework for playing with the notions of transfiguration and identity, at the same time, the creative dimension of performance becomes a permissive instrument for communication." (<http://www.palsfestival.se/fake-finns-and-wannabe-swedes/artists>)

⁴⁶ See <http://andrewmulenga.blogspot.co.za/2014/03/farewell-baba-jake.html>

I use materials that are directly connected to daily human life to evoke memories around personal or collective histories, tragedies and hopes. My body and dreadlocks are the embodiment of my life but I also use them as a framework for playing with the notions of transfiguration and identity, at the same time, the creative dimension of performance becomes a permissive instrument for communication (Chande: 2011).⁴⁷

Good examples of this type of work would be *Celebration* and *Awaiting Revelation* (Figures 33 and 34). Chande's work is well worth a mention in that it gives a unique example of "performance oriented" conceptual art, and his mention in this research as proof that conceptualism in contemporary Zambian art is more extant than may be generally accepted is equally important, once again enabling the genre to "breathe", as it is only through documentation such as this that conceptual art lives, again as earlier argued by Richards.

Victor Mutelekesha, who is now based in Norway, is another conceptual artist who feeds into the notion of "insertion", using his body as part of the work, although he puts particular emphasis on installation as well as video and sound: his work is therefore often a combination of "performance" and multimedia installation. An example of one of his earliest works, a performance done in Chipata, Zambia in 2000, is one such combination of a performance and an installation created from discarded materials. Simbao (2008)⁴⁸ writes that "he crawled inside a very precarious house made from jagged shards of glass, and curled up inside it as if asleep. While the action of cocooning oneself suggests the desire to withdraw into a state of personal privacy, the glass house denies the occupant privacy, making the potential for any personal transformation blatantly public" (Figure 35). Mutelekesha's work, like that of all the artists mentioned here perhaps excluding Phiri, attempts "to carefully navigate the different art scenes both within and beyond Zambia that are orchestrated by curators, critics and, of course, the art market" (Simbao 2008). One of Mutelekesha's best known works viewed in the Zambian art scene that leans towards conceptualism is the 2008 piece *Dagali Meltdown*, which reveals the complexity of his thought and work process but was perhaps perceived to be "too complex" for the Zambian audience. Notwithstanding, the work can well be considered a success as it found "life" in documentation, not only by the country's largest circulating newspaper⁴⁹, but also by Simbao, who subsequently made the work and the artist known to the South African Association of Visual Art Historians and the Association of Cultural Studies through two paper

⁴⁷ www.keketop.com

⁴⁸ In a research paper entitled *The Aftermath of Deterritorialization: Victor Mutelekesha and Contemporary Zambian Art in the Wake of Diaspora* presented at the South African Association of Visual Art Historians (SAVAH), Stellenbosch University, Ruth Simbao (2008)

⁴⁹ *The Post* Newspaper is Zambia's largest circulating daily tabloid

presentations in South Africa and Australia respectively. According to the *Weekend Post*, Mutelekesha's display sought to address climate change as well as the "political scenario with regards to issues of immigration"⁵⁰, and comprised a set of photographs, and video and sound installation (Figures 38 – 39). Commenting on the work and the exhibition, Simbao (2008) proposes that:

Mutelekesha's works can be read on numerous levels, but often seems to subtly suggest the restrictions that are imposed upon him as a Zambian artist – someone who in Zambia is seen to be 'unZambian' due to his Norwegian training, and someone who in Europe is seen to be 'not-African-enough' when he dares to stray from what are condescendingly seen to be his 'primitive' roots.

It can be noted that Mutelekesha's work received similar reactions to that of *Konse Kubili*, about five years earlier, and it can also be argued that the makeup of the crowd was still one and the same or at least very similar, comprising artists with no international exposure, a handful of academically-trained artists and a good number of expatriates. It must be mentioned also that Mutelekesha was one of the key artists who attended the Simbao-organised *Tafipelela* workshop and public space interventions in 2003, and was at least battle-tested in sharp reactions and criticisms towards unconventional work, which to some extent may be argued could be one of the reasons he decided to show the work in the first place, as he indicated in the *Weekend Post*:

I have convinced myself that we must have a starting point. The world is becoming smaller so the aspect of conceptual art is a part of what is now becoming a global village I feel if I avoid to do what I am doing in this small exhibition, stagnation will be there. Where there is a will there is a way. I am hoping for a day when artists will realise that there is more to art than making and selling work (*Weekend Post*, Friday, January 11, 2008).

With these remarks it can be suggested that Mutelekesha has well noted a longstanding rejection of conceptual language in contemporary Zambian art and is calling for change; it can be argued that he is suggesting that it is only through a change in attitude that the artists will be able to participate in this "global village" and not continue to lag behind.

⁵⁰ (*Weekend Post*, Zambia, Friday, January 11, 2008)

Simbao, not only gives a description of the work but also highlights the challenges faced by artists such as Mutelekesha who try to “navigate the different art scenes within Zambia and beyond” (Simbao 2008). According to Simbao (2008):

The show consisted of a video projection and a series of photographs that address the ecological degradation aggravated by global-warming – a global crisis that has local after-effects. This photograph depicts the place where the artist has vacationed annually since his stay in Norway, registering his concern that each year the snow arrives later and later. The area was once a popular ski ground that attracted lots of visitors, but the ski tracks that were cut into the mountain are now devoid of trees and people. . . . Certainly *Dagali Meltdown* was viewed as suspect, and Zambian art critic, Andrew Mulenga, wrote that the photographs and the place that they depicted were as alien to the audience as the surface of the moon. According to Mulenga, the audience was baffled, and people didn’t seem to know what the work was about, for “locally” he says, “conceptual art has often been a dilemma. Most artists don’t consider it art at all” (Mulenga 2008). He suggests that Mutelekesha could have “watered down” or “Zambianised” his presentations, reminiscent of the Zambianisation programme established in the early days of Independence when Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia’s first president, insisted that a certain percentage of the media and popular culture be home-grown, forbidding a degree of foreign influence that would potentially destabilize the country in a time of African nationalism.

In the aforementioned research paper, it is worth noting that Simbao does point out a number of significant theoretical notes concerning the “contemporary discussions of diaspora” which will be worth deliberating over in the next chapter, which discusses “the rise of global Africa”. Simbao (2008) indicates that *Dagali Meltdown* was an exhibition of paramount significance, because when “Viewed as a landscape as foreign as the moon, *Dagali Meltdown* becomes a fault line in contemporary discussions of diaspora, both for a local audience, and an international audience”. Simbao further argues that “It is imperative, though, that local African art scenes should not just be viewed as the after-effects of a Western-driven contemporary African art world, or . . . the leaning tower of globalism, hence the need for new studies of intra-continental Diasporas: Diasporas, for example, from Zimbabwe to South Africa” (Simbao 2008).

Further, it is imperative that works such as *Dagali Meltdown* not be ignored for their lack of ‘African’ or Zambian content, for this work successfully turns the tables, scrutinizing Europe instead of always being scrutinized by Europe. As such, the

aftermath of the contemporary African diaspora could in the long run have ripple effects that not only change the ways people on the African continent view conceptual art, but also the way that Africans view, display and scrutinize Europe, America and the rest of the world. In this sense then, after-effects can have enormous, pro-active effect (Simbao 2008).

Taking into account exhibitions such as *Dagali Meltdown*, a continued examination of the input of Zambian diaspora artists shows that, with the “right” audience and “atmosphere”, they can be positively ambitious to a point where their conceptual output can be said to be “world class”, and worthy of showing even in prominent European museums. Two examples are the previously mentioned artists Kate Naluyele and Chanda Mwenya, who were studying in Oslo in the late 2000s. Some of their most promising work was produced between 2007 and 2008. Naluyele was the youngest among the eight artists featured in the *Zambian Female Artists’ Exhibition in Norway 1999* in which she exhibited paintings. The exhibition catalogue stated that, in her paintings, “she focuses on a specific style, similar to the European 18th century landscape painting for a visual statement on social life in the periphery of the countryside where she spent most of her school life. Inspired by the life styles and calm Savannah landscapes in rural Chinsali district” (*Zambian Female Artists’ Exhibition in Norway 1999*: 21 – 22). An example of such a work is *Simple Living* (Figure 38). The text was written while Naluyele was still based in Zambia; seven years later when the artist was based in Oslo and in the first year of studies at the Oslo Academy of Fine Art, her work entitled *Defeatism*, an installation (Figure 29), was a total departure from her formalist “European 18th century landscape” type of work. *Defeatism* was featured in a display at the Historical Museum, in Oslo City centre, Norway. In an interview published in Zambia concerning the shift in her work, Naluyele had the following to say (*Weekend Post*, Friday August 10, 2007):

True this change has been inevitable since my contact with Europe, I realised that I have so much awareness to give, here where the message is most relevant regarding imposed western culture and social policies and their adverse impact on Africa Installation was the most effective way I could compress and convey the many things I mean to say in one work without overdoing the concept.

Kate also said she was merely taking advantage of the fact that she was now working in an environment where installation is recognized as a fine art tool, and that it was in no way a compromise to her career. “I developed this particular installation in 2004, in London at Delfina Studios. Even though I waited for the appropriate time and place

before fully exposing it And Norway being one of the richest countries in the world as well as consumers of high-tech inventions is a good place to expose myself.”

From a first year art student coming from a “conservative” art scene who had earlier been framed as a painter in the “European 18th century landscape” manner, it can be argued that *Defeatism* is undeniably a very compelling work. The installation itself included a readymade in the form of a plastic chair, text in the form of scribbling on a wall of the museum and discarded objects in the form of illuminated broken glass, glass which she indicates she “broke out of frustration as a symbol of the shattered dream of civilisation and its unfair costs” (*Weekend Post*, Friday August 10, 2007). The multifaceted context of her work was described in the newspaper article as follows:

Kate said the project manager at the museum saw her installation in her school studio space last December and asked if they could showcase it in their *Kongospor* exhibition. The show is based on their investigative reflection into Congo’s historical interactions with Norway from the time it was the property of King Leopold II. Kate explained that her installation particularly points out the status around the mining of the mineral Coltan (Columbite-Tantalite). A mineral that she says is the most critical in today’s technology of which 80% of the world’s resources are in the war-torn DRC (*Weekend Post*, Friday August 10, 2007).

Like Naluyele’s work, Mwenya’s 2008 piece, *Viewer’s Discretion* (Figure 40), also shows an outstanding conceptual attitude; created entirely from ready-mades, the installation comprised a working television set placed on a table in front of an armchair, and just such items as would be placed in an apartment. The empty armchair has a kitchen knife stabbed in its back with imitation blood dripping to the floor. This almost self-descriptive piece, perhaps more than any of the other works by Zambians discussed here, does not necessarily speak to notions of “insertion” vis-à-vis “use of the body” (Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 27), neither does it reference the “masquerade” nor “ritualism”. Mwenya’s work can also be argued to be unpretentiously “cosmopolitan”. As Richards (2002: 36) points out, “cosmopolitan cultures uniquely cultivate an enabling symbolic and material ecology for conceptualism”; by implication Mwenya was already coming from the cosmopolitan city of Lusaka, the Zambian capital, except the material used in this particular work may not have been readily at his disposal. It has a universal visual language that can be claimed by an artist from any part of the world, and the artist’s own words give this suggestion credence. In the *Weekend Post* (Zambia, Friday January, 2, 2008), Mwenya states:

In this installation, which I must say was well received, I was trying to address the need for us as mankind to carefully choose our information as well as our entertainment in this high-tech age where information is available at the click of a button . . . we live in an era of information overloads and we are easily susceptible to corrupt moral values.

Viewer's Discretion can also be read as a piece inviting the viewer to sit in the empty armchair but to also be wary that they may be stabbed in the back. "Stabbing in the back" embodies betrayal, therefore the viewer may be betrayed by what they are seeing on the screen, perhaps betrayal by an untruthful media. *Viewer's Discretion* was shown during the Oslo National Art Academy's annual exhibition in 2008. While both Naluyele's *Defeatism* and Mwenya's *Viewer's Discretion* may have been well documented by the Historic Museum and Oslo National Art Academy respectively, in Zambia it is only in the newspaper that pieces were at least able to "breathe"; their mention in this thesis may serve as a contribution to the ongoing conversations on conceptualism.

Despite the many challenges contemporary Zambian artists face with regards to assuming a conceptual attitude, specifically a "conceptually unenlightened" lay audience and the lack of an intellectual following and by extension meaningful scholarly documentation, it can be argued that the artists are unrelenting and continue to produce work even in the smallest ways that they can. A recent example of such an effort was the inaugural *Harvesting Workshop*. According to the *Saturday Post*, May 30, 2015, the "inaugural *Harvesting Workshop* hosted by the Mutale Kalinosi-led Munandi Art Studio (MAS) in Chongwe District" was "designed in the form of a one-month artist's residency, it was organized for the sole purpose of bringing artists together to share collaborative conceptual ideas for future projects, an incubator for creativity". It is 15 years since Kalinosi's collaborative show *Konse Kubili* with Haloba (mentioned above), and he has neither given up on conceptual art nor the seemingly non-receptive Zambian audience. According to the *Saturday Post*, Kalinosi's intention was to host a fairly large group of artists in a peri-urban setting, something akin to the *Insaka* Artists' workshops; but although "only 7 artists were in attendance instead of the 15 that were expected, artists still participated in a robust exchange of ideas and unbridled creativity, exploring themes ranging from parliamentary politics to colonialism, all expressed by means of conceptual art using mainly found objects," (*Saturday Post*, May 30, 2015). In the newspaper article, Kalinosi indicates that the whole idea of the workshop – if not that of conceptual art – came "From the experience" he "gained in Europe" and he "thought of bringing a new independent platform conducive for artists to create art, but also in Zambia artists are stuck with the 14th century

type of art, using brush and paint on canvas or chisel on wood or stone” (*Saturday Post*, May 30, 2015). Kalinosi also goes on further to label himself as a “conceptual minority”, and question the notion of contemporary “Zambian art” as well as re-visit observations on the audience of *Konse Kubili*. Kalinosi (*Saturday Post*, May 30, 2015), stresses:

I’m one of the very few conceptual artists in Zambia, because the culture we have developed in this country is slow to change in everything not only the artists but a nation as a whole. Someone saw my works and said in my face that, this is westerner’s art, and I asked him to show me the Zambian art, he pointed to a painting on canvas.

“But the westerners have been painting on canvas since 14th centuries. So you see how we are slow in changing. You change the subject on the canvas and you call it Zambian art and other forms of art are not art? Stretching and painting using brush or palette knife on canvas were used by artists like John Constable until the camera was invented The Zambian audience didn’t understand *Konse Kubili* because in the first place they don’t even understand the word ‘conceptual’ or ‘contemporary’. That’s why it was taken with mixed feelings, and a lot of them referred it to the west, but conceptual art is not a new thing to Africa, it has been practised here before the *Muzungu* (European) stepped foot on African soil.

The last statement speaks to Chapter One, which highlights the foundations of contemporary art in Zambia. Kalinosi, however, places the lack of appreciation of conceptual art on the “type of education” that Zambians are receiving, and feels that this “needs to be revisited.” Nevertheless, his *Harvesting Workshop* can be seen to be successful in its “use of non-conventional media”, which saw artists such as “Danny Lwando, a painter and photographer” leave their “comfort zones” and create works such as *Mr Speaker* using rocks, found wood and sand (Figure 41). In this work, Lwando places thirteen rocks representing members of parliament facing a towering “speaker” figure; the latter is the only one that appears to have representation of limbs; garnished with discarded electronic gadgets this figure has a robotic aura. The “speaker” can therefore be read as an automaton that is likely controlled by one who is not in sitting in the “parliament”, perhaps a president or monarch. The rocks that represent members of parliament may also represent lifelessness as rocks are inanimate, they can further be read as members of parliament that just attend the sessions, sit and do not act. The complete piece therefore can be read as a caricature of parliament, a political statement that suggests the incompetence of parliamentarians towards the electorate, particularly in connection with the

Zambian parliament's on-going rhetoric with regards to the amendment of the national constitution.

Ship on the Mediterranean (Figure 42), a collaborative work by Kalinosi and scrap metal sculptor Joseph Shakulipa, may also speak to notions of “information overload” just like Mwenya's *Viewer Discretion* discussed earlier. It features a readymade, comprising an old, disused television set on which a collage of newspaper cuttings, text and images are glued onto the screen. It features two images, one a group of Zambian politicians and the other a group of athletes, a typical representation of media packaging, politics and sport. The politicians' image, however, is placed under a headline that reads “SATA ENDS PF”. The headline appears to reference notions of the late Zambian president being the driving force of Zambia's ruling Patriotic Front (PF) party and that, after his death, the party is no more, and this also speaks to the fact that the party faced a “power struggle” after its founder, the late head of state, passed away. It can therefore be read as the end of Sata being the end of PF. Nevertheless, the work also evokes notions of Africa's appetite for “western” consumer products like television and news that come from across the Mediterranean; the television set may actually be read as a “ship on the Mediterranean”, in constant transit, bringing with it goods (advertisements), ideas, news and so on.

2.5 Contemporary Zambian artists' understanding of conceptualism

During field interviews conducted for this research in 2013 with artists in the two main art-producing districts in Zambia, the administrative capital Lusaka and the tourist capital Livingstone, artists were asked: “What do you understand by the term ‘conceptual art?’” The table below indicates figures that include the artists' educational backgrounds; it must be noted however that two of them, Milumbe Haimbe and Gladys Kalichini, have university degrees in different fields of study other than art. Their individual artistic training and development has been enhanced through their attendance at workshops in Zambia and abroad; as such, for the purpose of this research, their statistics appear under the “Self-taught/workshop-trained” category.

Total artists interviewed	Artists that responded to question	University Degree level training	Tertiary Diploma level training	Self-taught/workshop-trained	Artists with international exposure (travel)	Artists from Lusaka	Artists from Livingstone
77	51	1	21	28	33	63	14

Table 1. Contemporary Zambian artists interviewed (2013)

Below are a few select responses that relate to my argument in this chapter (See Appendix A for further examples):

“Conceptual art is the foundation of African art, conceptualism is what you think, what you digest, how is it that it can benefit those that are not you.” (Alexis Phiri – Performance)

“Conceptual art provokes thinking, no one explains to you what it is, it’s more entertaining, it is not like the *Freedom Statue*⁵¹, but it’s not common in Zambia.” (Almakio Banda – Painter, Sculptor, found material, assemblage)

“Just the term comes from the word concept . . . there are not so many in Zambia but at the workshop⁵² we saw a lot of it, mostly by foreign artists and Zambian artists in diaspora.” (Chifuchi Kandala – Sculptor)

“A lot of people, when they mean to say ‘contemporary art’ they say ‘conceptual art’. But conceptual art is more about the concept and I think it came with the modernist artists and these were the guys that did Dada . . . the toilet guy, what’s his name Duchamp, I think he can be considered the father of conceptual art. From what I have read, I think I’m from the school that considers him the father, all these other movements just added onto what he introduced. Conceptual can be assemblage it can also be painting.” (Milumbe Haimbe – Multimedia)

“It is when you have an idea and it is expressed using very minimal objects or you demonstrate an action with very minimal expression involving either material or yourself, to some extent it remains more of an idea than an actual tangible thing. It’s like presenting an idea using very minimal things to express or respond to a given situation. I think it’s a very good expression except I think there is a certain process of development that you have to undergo to be able to process the idea and present it. When you are conceptually developed you can translate an idea with very few things.” (William Miko – Painter, Lecturer)

“Conceptual art, you can come up with all kinds of objects to claim your creativity, its art with free use of objects, but there is a way the artist conveys a message or statement using those objects . . . it could be just using them as a metaphor a critical idea he has come up with using everyday objects which are not art materials in the conventional sense. You can put anything in the gallery and argue day in and day out that this is my work, this is what it means and this is the idea behind it.” (Zenzele Chulu – Painter)

⁵¹ An important Zambian monument where Independence Day Anniversary speeches take place in Lusaka

⁵² *Insaka* International Artists Workshop 2013 held in Livingstone, Zambia. Some foreign and Zambian diaspora artists including Victor Mutelekesha were present.

The artists above responses provide a general idea of what contemporary Zambian artists understand conceptual art to be. The earlier sections of this chapter did not only reveal that the definition of 'conceptual art' is contested, but that it is also an especially academic strand of the visual arts, perhaps the most academic. Table 1, on the other hand, indicates that, generally, Zambian artists have limited academic training, this, as indicated in Chapter One is not by choice, but is a result of a lack of private and public investment into university degree level training since Zambia's independence, and the few that managed to obtain degrees before the opening of the Zambia Open University had to do so by attending universities abroad, mainly through scholarships. With this in mind, it must be noted that the respondents to the question in this section may have had no contact with the writings of LeWitt, Kosuth, Lippard, Hassan, Oguibe or Richards, but possess a fair and acceptable understanding of "conceptual art" within their own contexts. Furthermore the chapter in its entirety gives an indication that conceptual art is not a Euro-American construct, because not only did the "father" of conceptual art in Zambia acquire his influences from China, but the Zambian artists discussed here indicate an inherent conceptual impulse which may have only been augmented by periods in Europe, resulting in them adopting "two sides of the conceptual coin", one that appeals to the world of international curators and viewers, whom it was mentioned place high value on conceptual art and the local viewers who for reasons pointed out in both Chapter 1 and 2 often tend to shun conceptual art. It has also been illustrated that conceptual art as a flourishing genre in Zambia particularly within the context of the artists' workshop, and revealed that its (conceptual art practice) only problem is the lack of documentation, which as I had indicated earlier is part of the purpose of this thesis, to play a pragmatic role in documenting a "history", "present" and future of conceptual art in Zambia.

It is imperative that Africans and Zambians define their own work, not just as followers but as original creators of original knowledge and meaning. While this might be at early stages, it is critical that such local work is rigorously documented in order to support a revisionist project. Having pointed out that the conceptual impulse is not entirely a Euro-American one, it does not mean that African and Zambian scenes are now in a situation in which they can all sit back and say 'all is equal' and they live in a 'global' art world where everyone has an equal say. In the following chapter I examine the 'global' art world and what I perceive as its inequalities particularly with regards to Zambian artists. At the same time, I will analyse ways in which Zambian artists are applying their own agency for recognition against numerous odds.

CHAPTER 3: “GLOBAL ART” AND ZAMBIA’S POSITION IN THE RISE OF NEW ART WORLDS

Having examined the foundations and influences of contemporary art in Zambia (Chapter 1) and conceptualism in relation to the international art world, Africa and Zambia specifically (Chapter 2), the purpose of this chapter is to further examine contemporary art in relation to recent discussions about the “global contemporary” and the supposed rise of new art worlds (Belting, Buddensieg and Weibel 2013). As such, this chapter uses the specifically located discourse of contemporary Zambian art to open up discussions about globalisation and what is being framed as “global art”. “Global art”, as Simbao (2015: 262) points out, “is a term developed by Hans Belting and Peter Weibel in 2006 for the research programme *Global Art and the Museum* at the Centre for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany. This was followed by the exhibition *The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds after 1989* (2012), curated by Andrea Buddensieg and Peter Weibel, as well as the 2013 publication *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds* edited by Belting, Buddensieg and Weibel”. In the examination of Belting et al.’s declaration of new art worlds, as a revisionist Art Historian I argue that it is critical to document and analyse local narratives such as the narrative of contemporary art in Zambia, as this narrative has largely been left out of the broader narrative of international contemporary art. I submit this in agreement with Simbao (2015) who argues that the narrative of global art tends to “‘writes out’ particular narratives” (Simbao 2015: 263). I begin with an analysis of “contemporary art” and “global art”, and then conclude the chapter with an analysis of Zambian artist Stary Mwaba who attempts to navigate the complexities of working in a locally specific (and often overlooked) art scene as well as a so-called global context.

3.1 “Contemporary art”, a re-examination

In this section I examine the mediation of “contemporary art” by international scholars and curators who remain at the helm of brokering inclusivity and exclusivity of contemporary art scenes like that of Zambia within the framework of the biennale, by so doing compelling Zambian artists to adapt strategies to navigate this marginalisation in a quest for visibility vis-à-vis inclusivity in the “global art” world. Zambian artists undeniably feel it is important to be included in the bigger picture as David Chirwa implies, summoning his colleagues: “Let us strive to be on the walls and podiums of the prestigious museums of contemporary art of the world, not in the crowds” (Henderson 2005).

Before going into a detailed examination of Belting et al.'s notions of the "global contemporary" (2013) art worlds, a further examination into Terry Smith's (2011: 10) definition of "contemporary art" proposes that, in broader terms, "contemporary art" may best be understood by "thinking of it as evolving within three closely-related yet distinct currents", and by observing that these currents particularly differ "from each other in kind, scale and scope". Smith (2011) suggests that "Contemporary Art (styles/practices)", "The Postcolonial turn (ideologies/issues)" and "The Arts of Contemporaneity (concern/strategies)" are the three currents of contemporary art. The first current has already been isolated and briefly highlighted at the beginning of this chapter. The second and third currents categorised by Smith (2011: 10–11) are contemplatively broad and many of the issues they relate to have been addressed at length in Chapters 1 and 2, such as "decolonialization", "postcolonialism" and "shortcomings of political struggles of the 1960s and 1970s" (Smith 2011: 11). While Smith (2013a: 189) admits that his "argument about the currents within contemporary art can stand without dependence on the more general idea of contemporaneity, but genuinely historical hypotheses must encompass both the general and the particular", he also points to the open-endedness of these currents, suggesting that the second current "is too diverse, uneven, contradictory, and oppositional to amount to an art movement in any of the usual senses" and the third "current is even more diverse internally".

In the essay "Our Contemporaneity?", published in the book *Contemporary Art 1989 to the Present*, edited by Alexander Dumbadze and Susanne Hudson Smith (2013b), Terry Smith continues to provide a more comprehensive framing of "contemporary art" and attempts to periodise it as well as point out the problematic nature of its fluidity. Smith (2013b: 19–20) submits that:

[C]ontemporary art is an art historical category still in formation; in ordinary usage 'contemporary' means the past twenty or thirty years; because it excludes art being made today but in pre-contemporary modes, it cannot encompass all current art; and, finally, when it is used to name kinds of art it 'violates' not only the traditional categories of the practice-based (plastic) arts but also more recent ones, such as "performance art". In the face of such confusion, how is it possible that in the history of art we have come to adopt a category that does not describe any particular aesthetic modality the way we would, once, describe hyperrealism, cubism, or even 'body art' or 'land art', but a category that simply bears the name 'contemporary'?

What Smith presents here, in the preceding analysis, assists to further develop an overall proposition that further helps outline “contemporary art” as he identifies some of its key elements and characteristics as a visual art(s)-making genre, and an art historic movement that will continue to be useful within the discourse of this chapter as it proceeds into an examination of the “globalization” of contemporary art. Smith (2013a: 186) proposes that:

There is no doubt that contemporary artistic practice has been shaped above all by the forces of globalization that, from the 1980s until recently, predominated within international economic exchange, drove much of worldwide politics and disseminated spectacle as the theatre of individual and collective imagination in the lives of people all over the world.

Smith (2013a) observes that sensitivities of “contemporary art” in a “globalized” perspective are greatly institutionalised. He argues that:

Globalized perceptions of contemporary art have been heavily promoted by major museums in search of a competitive edge as centres of attraction within spectacle culture. They are used by the international art market to push up prices of what became around 2000 its most glamorous, risky and in principle infinitely self-replenishing sector (Smith 2013a: 186).

However, essentially periodising “contemporary art” in line with “globalization”, he provocatively asks “Perhaps we can no longer so conveniently substitute ‘globalization’ for ‘modernity’ and/or ‘postmodernity’ when it comes to naming the overarching framework of present and future possibility?” Essentially, in this chapter I argue that, while there is a current tendency for proponents of ‘global art’ to be idealistic about globalisation as there is, as they suggest, a rise in ‘new art worlds’, there is still the need for the Euro-American art world to more actively acknowledge its role in dominance in shaping the so-called international art world, and in providing the space for Africans (and Zambians) to assert their own agency in terms of defining what and how they produce as artists.

3.2 Tensions between “contemporary art” and “global contemporary art”

Griffin (2013: 7) argues that “[I]f art is necessarily bound up with its institutions – in other words, made legible as art only through and within its various apparatus of production, display and circulation, in addition to its discourses – then nothing is so crucial to our conception of contemporary art as globalization”. He however does indicate that “globalization” is a term

that is often utilised in recent economic and political theory pertaining to increased worldwide communication and an expanding world market (Griffin 2013: 7).

Within artistic circles the word has been used more specifically to describe an exponentially increased audience for (and financing of) contemporary art, attended by a radical proliferation of public and private museums and exhibitions throughout the world and, further expanded and ever-more rapid travel network and exchange of information among constituents of art on all points of the compass (Griffin 2013: 7).

To exemplify this point, Griffin (2013) argues that a work can be produced in one part of the world and sold to a gallery in another part of the world who will later display it

... for tens of thousands of both local audiences and tourists from dozens of countries
... Precisely such circumstances, however, demand that art be seen in correspondence with the larger context of a world shaped principally by the forces and flows of global capital (Griffin 2013:7).

Returning to the “globalization” of art in a museum or cultural context, Griffin again unpacks the institutionalisation of art and the role it has played. In “the context of the museum”, worldwide events around the year 1989 such as “the fall of the Berlin Wall”, “the end of apartheid in South Africa and the execution of pro-democracy demonstrators in China’s Tiananmen Square” (Griffin 2013: 8) would inform the “spectacle culture” (Smith 2013a: 186) that became appealing to the international art world. Concerning the subject matter of the period, Griffin (2013: 8) explains:

While artists in previous decades might have wanted audiences to interrogate relations of viewership and of arts relationship with culture more generally, here were world-historical events forcing a mass reconsideration of ideology, of national and post-colonial identity (West, North and South) – all of which were widening forces of commerce and technology.

He declares that “the very ground under the institution of art had shifted”, and “if the museum was an initial object of post war artistic critique, nevertheless linked to the idea of the modern nation-state, artists and curators alike would now seek alternative discourses and frameworks for their projects” (Griffin 2013: 7). He indicates that numerous biennales emerged in the mid-to-late 1990s and specifically points out the key ones that gave an ample indication of the “multinational” or, as might be suggested here, “pre-global” nature of these events. Griffin (2013: 9) explains:

For instance, the inaugural Johannesburg Biennial, curated by Lorna Ferguson, opened in 1995 just a year after South Africa's first multiracial elections, in an effort to establish the country as part of a larger global community (a second iteration, curated by Enwezor, was titled 'Trade Routes' and explicitly revolved around the theme of globalization). The Gwangju Biennale was created the same year, against the backdrop of South Korea's first freely-elected government after a decades-long military dictatorship; titled 'Beyond the borders', its first exhibition aimed to present work reflecting the dissolution of longstanding political ideology to nationality (Griffin 2013: 9)

Griffin also makes mention of Manifesta, a roving "European Biennial of Contemporary Art" (Griffin 2013: 17) that was launched in 1996 against the environment of "the fall of the Berlin Wall as a cue", as well as Havana Biennial in Cuba that preceded Manifesta by a decade. The Havana Biennial was

. . . created specifically to highlight artists of the Third World on the global stage (though later iterations of this exhibition would include Asian artists, effectively expanding its purview more generally to non-Western artists) this large-scale exhibition took region, as opposed to country, as its organizing principle (Griffin 2013: 9).

In line with the all-encompassing attitude of this particular event is the fact that Zambia – a country that is not in the mainstream biennale circuit – was also represented in the Havana Biennial in 1989, as was indicated by Hartley (2015) in Chapter 1. According to Hartley, the Zambian government was invited to attend but, at the time, commitment to arts and culture programmes were at an all-time low, therefore, Mpapa Gallery in collaboration with the Lechwe Art Trust – which provided logistics – took up the offer and featured the Zambian painter Stephen Kappata in the show.

In his book *Contemporary Art: A Very Short Introduction*, Julian Stallabrass (2004: 48) also briefly examines biennales in the "panoply of global art production" after the fall of the Berlin Wall. He proposes that "while the art world has long been cosmopolitan, the end of the cold war" brought about a "retooling" of art world "practices and habits" (Stallabrass 2004: 23). Also linking the "art world" to "economic globalization", he points out that "just as business executives circled the earth in search of new markets, so a breed of nomadic global curators began to do the same shuttling from one biennale or transnational art event to another" (Stallabrass 2004: 23). Concerning this "New World Order" of the "Biennial Era", Stallabrass

2004: 23) suggests that “The general art-world view of this development is sanguine: the linear, singular, white and masculine principles of modernism have finally fallen, to be replaced by a multiple, diverse, rainbow-hued factually complex proliferation of practices and discourses”. I concur with Stallabrass on the emergence of the “breed of nomadic curators” but find this last statement problematic concerning the general art-world view as I will point out in the next section. With the cosmopolitan outlook of each of these events, “a typical theme for a biennale, should be stretched to include just about everything and this meant very nearly nothing” (Stallabrass 2004: 20). Where the average museum art exhibitions were to a large extent limited to particular themes, regions and artists of a certain skills level and professional proficiency level, the biennales ushered in a proliferation of liberalism, tearing down “traditional” barriers. Although it can be argued that, to a degree, this was diverging as much as it was progressive, this liberalisation of the contemporary art institution can be seen as a double-edged sword as again it appeared to create “biennale elitism” as Stallabrass (2004: 24) also indicates:

In each event, ideally the point is to bring about an exchange of the blue-chip standards of globalized art - and to look at the biennale rosters is to see how many of the same names incessantly recur into productive contact with local artists and circumstances. Ideally again, this should in time produce a hybrid diversity of art forms produced by people of widely differing backgrounds and attachments, that will speak both globally and locally, inhabiting and producing in-between spaces that undermine the homogenous blocs – above all, the nation-state – on which power relies.

The rise of biennales propagated “artists, from China, Cuba, Russia, South Africa, or Korea, for example”, bringing “to the global art world new voices, perspectives, ideas and styles” (Stallabrass 2004: 24). The biennales’ role, however, should not only be identified as being restricted to the breaking down of cultural, ideological and institutional barriers on a worldwide scale; they have also played an intrinsically commercial role vis-à-vis globalisation in the context of economics, and breathed new life into the economic viability of museums and by extension the cities and national economies that support and sponsor arts and culture generally, because the “extraordinary proliferation of biennales is driven by the same forces that have caused new museums to spring up like mushrooms, and old ones to expand and rebuild” (Stallabrass 2004: 25). He writes that in the milieu of the biennale, unlike any other international event such as “a fair of new technology or an important football match” (Stallabrass 2004: 26), and through them (biennales) “art retains a kudos that transcends ordinary culture and entertainment, and gestures towards the universal” (Stallabrass 2004: 26)

because “it not only embodies but actively propagandizes the virtues of globalization” (Stallabrass 2004: 26).

A new generation of artists not only claimed recognition but proclaimed coevalness in a worldwide Koine of art” (Belting and Buddensieg 2013: 28). They also assert that artists from the rest of the world (i.e. outside Europe and North America) subsequently experienced a level playing field in the global art world, apart from having a “worldwide Koine”, as “correspondence with the western art scene replaced their nonpresence, which had been a result of exclusion” (Belting and Buddensieg 2013: 28). Weibel also backs this perception of inclusion, again in reference to the end of the cold war, stating:

Global art after the collapses of 1989 does not ask for inclusion nor can it naively demand the elimination of all mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion; it would, however, like to break up the western monopoly. In that respect, these new art worlds create new mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion (Weibel 2013: 21).

In the same consideration, according to Belting and Buddensieg (2013: 28), “Today’s art presents itself not only as new art, but also as a new kind of art, an art that is expanding all over the globe”. In other words, what the two authors are doing here is declaring a new art historical era, implying that instead of a singular “global art world” there is now an emergence of several art worlds, simultaneously. Belting and Buddensieg (2013: 28) write:

The last remaining stronghold of the western art concept is the notion of a single and independent art world which is believed to survive even today as a global art world, again in the singular. But, in fact, this belief is contradicted by the recent emergence of several art worlds that coexist and compete in the wake of the global practice of contemporary art. The mapping of new art regions with a transnational character such as the Asia-Pacific region or the one in the Middle East is clear proof of the formation of specific art worlds where art meets different conditions and cultural traditions. Their claims to be contemporary have emerged as their all-defining feature.

However, drawing from Simbao (2015), I argue that Belting and Buddensieg’s pinning of all time frames on a Western timeframe is problematic and suggest that there is no level playing field and that the two authors write from a position of privilege. Simbao (2015: 266) submits that “the socio-political and socio-economic world changes that occurred in 1989 are used, to some degree, to reposition Euro-American dominance in the arts by upholding an authorial

voice that narrates a particular version of this global change. This “northern” tale of “magic” assumes ownership of global shifts, becoming blind to events and stories, particularly in the global south, which were present prior to 1989s”. Belting and Buddensieg (2013: 28) further legitimise the aforesaid “plurality of worlds, as a contemporary condition”, by linking it to anthropological theory, if not perhaps betraying the fact that by so doing they are doing with this theory to contemporary art what Darwinian theory did in terms of being a background for the framing of curiosities from “other” cultures in western museums throughout the periods of colonialism, post-colonialism and modernisation. Emphasising this multiplicity of art worlds, they declare:

The global reality is, in fact, no longer synonymous with the all-encompassing term “world”, but is composed of a multiplicity of worlds. This conclusion is not only valid for societies and cultures at large, but also includes the newly established art worlds. The resulting multiplicity of art worlds is in part explained by the observation that art production is turning increasingly into *culture* production, especially in such places where art is still a new experience and needs the support of local traditions of visual production (Belting and Buddensieg 2013: 28).

While this statement may seem contradictory to the earlier claim that there is now a worldwide “koine” of art, Belting and Bunddensieg (2013: 29) emphasise that “the new art worlds”, are “opposing and replacing the colonial history of world art”. Giving a historic plotting of “world art” and highlighting its colonial ethos, Belting (2013:178), writes that:

World art was initially coined as a colonial notion that was in use for collecting the art of ‘the others’ as a different kind of art, an art that was also found in museums where anthropologists and not art critics had the say-so.

He alludes that “up to this date the colonial connotation had been inherent in the conception of world art” and continues by stating that this “was central to the separation of world art from western art by the abyss created by history’s narratives”. He argues that in recent times “world art . . . matters for identity politics in cultures that had no previous share in colonial selecting and collecting” (Belting 2013: 180). Belting, also states that currently “world art” has received much public attention because these “cultures”, “precolonial” or “postcolonial”, are in the process of reclaiming the objects exhibited in the “world art” exhibitions of museums. According to Belting (2013: 180):

. . . world art nowadays also receives unwelcome attention due to the pressure of repatriation claims from the former colonies. Metropolitan museums of the west, often

accused of being outposts of empire colonialism, today have to rethink their arguments in order to defend their collections. The British Museum is among them, and Neil MacGregor claimed his museum to be ‘not only a museum of the world but also a museum for the world’. Along these lines he opened a blockbuster show with the Chinese Terracotta Army that attracted large crowds in 2007, thus ascertaining his claim not only to own, but also promote world art.

In relation to the example just given, there have been several similar instances in museums throughout the western world, but “the former dualism of art and artefact was put aside when contemporary art production in a professional sense had become general practice and was no longer the west’s prerogative” (Belting 2013: 181). This contemporary art production, discussed earlier, “leaves art history with unexpected questions. Can art history become global at all? Who writes art history in the future and does it need to be art history in the common sense and with a common concept not only of art but also of history?” (Belting 2013: 183). Belting, still on the distinction of “world art” and “global art”, argues that: “After the arrival of *global art*, also *world art* must be newly defined and, ultimately, liberated from its colonial baggage”, and that the world has been divided by art history, something that the “global age tends to restore” (Belting 2013: 183). He contends that with this global age “art history” is now open to new voices, interpretations and participants (Belting 2013: 184) and that contemporary art’s departure from art history means that the latter faces new challenges. As he points out:

Global art not only accelerates contemporary art’s departure from the guidelines of a linear art history, it also flourishes in parts of the world where art history has never been practiced or where it only followed colonial models. The loss of a central place of art history in art theory and art display may also explain the new role of curatorial studies or visual studies that have replaced art history in the curriculum of art academies The majority of today’s art curators are trained in political, social or cultural sciences rather than art history and this trend to emphasize art’s political or cultural agendas as against aesthetics (Belting 2013: 184)

Belting (2013: 184) declares that, while the other “art worlds” are writing their histories, art history in the west has to be re-written, because audiences too have adapted to new ways of looking at “western art” and “at the same time, when art production becomes a global condition, the diversity of visual cultures or art histories that appear behind today’s art practice and art

theories is something we all have in common” (Belting 2013: 184). Consolidating this argument, he states:

In other words, what at first sight looks like the new homogeneity of a ‘flat’ world, a second glance reveals as a diversity of traditions that demand a similar diversity of local narratives, including that of western art history Today art history faces a challenge of a different kind. The rise of new art worlds in many parts of the world demands a narrative that also takes into account the growing role of economics and the politics of art in describing art This new state of things, in retrospect, sharpens the view of what art has been in the past and demands the interaction of different art histories. In other words, the present world leaves most of us in a similar situation in the face of an unwritten history of world art as joint enterprise (Belting 2013: 184,185).

The aforementioned authors in this section have helped elaborate the peculiarities of “globalization”, and the “globalization of the art world”, as well as the notions of “world art” and “global art”. It can also be said that Belting et al. have collectively argued that, with “global art”, not only has an era of multiple art worlds emerged but also an entire era in art, that of “contemporary art”, has come to a close in the guise of globalisation, and therefore the current era, the “contemporary era”, has come to an end and there is a need to coin a new term and epoch. I disagree with this notion and complicate and critique it in the next section of my thesis.

3.3 “Global art”: murky waters disguised in lofty conjectural rhetoric?

Consequently, to widen the discussion as well as consider a departure point to counter the above-mentioned authors on globalisation in the art world, I have selected two essays by Noel Carroll and Ruth Simbao respectively as this will guide the discussion into an endeavoured mapping of Zambia within “global art” or the multiplicity of art worlds, as it were. But before engaging in Carroll’s and Simbao’s texts, I would again like to reiterate that, as a Zambian, I am taking the agency of assuming an active role of giving a local narrative by understanding the “global art” world. Here I am once again inspired by a text from Fall, which suggests “If the Zambian art scene wishes to take an active part in the adventure of art, it will have to understand what the art world is about. Or let’s say art worlds. Because there are many art worlds around the globe. Networks and communities are diverse, and sometimes never meet” (Fall 2003: 10).

Carroll (2007: 131) argues that, although the world has admittedly become a “smaller place” in terms of the amount of time it takes “to move information, people, investment capital and so

forth around, “there is a legitimate controversy about whether this condition deserves to be regarded as a new historical epoch in its own right, namely the epoch of globalization” (Carroll 2007: 131). Carroll argues:

For on the one hand, the interconnectedness, signalled by barbarisms like ‘globality’ is, as critics point out, exaggerated by enthusiasts, since many parts of the world have not been integrated into the pertinent global networks. For example, much of sub-Saharan Africa has not been. Thus the present epoch is not truly global, if that is supposed to imply that every part of the world is in lively commerce and contact on a relatively equal footing with every other part of the world. Rather, the current state of affairs is very uneven . . . on the other hand . . . capitalism, perhaps the driving engine behind the globalizing tendencies of the present, has always had worldwide ambitions with respect to markets and resources. So, on this view globalization is merely an advanced stage of capitalism Globalization, that is, is not a unique historical moment, though we in the west may be vain enough to regard our lifetime as the dawning of a new age (Carroll 2007: 131).

Carroll (2007: 131) continues by pointing out that the west has already tried to declare a “new age” twice in recent times, reflecting that “we have already done this at least twice before in recent memory – first with the age of Aquarius and then with postmodernism”, implying that there is an apparent rush to declare a new historic era, as has been indicated in the arguments of Belting, et al. Again I concur with Simbao (2015) here, who suggests:

The contradiction of a celebration of a “postethnic”⁵³ and supposedly democratic art world, and the apparent condoning of a capitalist perpetuation of identity-based “ethnocentrism” generates the overwhelming sense that this framing of “global art”’s scrupulously functions in a particular direction, one which upholds old forms of privilege” (Simbao 2015: 271).

Carroll (2007: 131) states that “the age of western colonial imperialism was, needless to say, a form of globalization, albeit lamentable in a great many respects”, meaning:

. . . in short, the phenomenon of globalization, understood as a new phase of world history, is dubious because it is incomplete – regions of the world lie outside the global village and, in any event, the process has been on-going for centuries.

⁵³ Simbao refers here to Belting et al’s use of the term “postethnic”.

In connection with opposing the notions of the ending of an era or closing of an epoch, Smith (2013b) can also be paralleled with the arguments of Simbao and Carroll respectively. He observes that “contemporary art” is an “art historical category still in formation” (Smith 2013b: 19). Carroll (2007: 132) writes that: “As in every arena of culture, the arts and entertainments are beneficiaries of the communications-media explosion,” and that the “impression that the arts have gone utterly global is hard to resist” (2007: 134), because people from opposite sides of the globe are able to expose their work to one another by means of the internet, television, radio and mobile devices. “Throughout the history of art we find that where there is cultural contact between different traditions, poaching and outright assimilation has been as likely as not.” (Carroll 2007: 135). Furthermore, in this regard, Carroll contends that, rather than thinking of relations as “global”, it is better to think of them as “transnational”. Thus, instead of a “global institution” of art, “an integrated, transnational institution of art is assembling itself before our very eyes” (Carroll 2007: 136), although as has already been seen this may pose as an opposing view to that of Belting et al. It can also be asked “who could possibly be in a position to pronounce authoritatively upon the direction of art worldwide today?” (Carroll 2007: 136) – a question that links to Simbao’s earlier probe of Belting et al.’s ‘say-so’ – because as he points out it is “undoubtedly, absurdly overarching, given the sheer amount of work at issue, to pretend to be able to say anything informative about the present course of art internationally” (Carroll 2007: 135). He again argues that another objection to the existence “of something we might call the global institution of art is that not everyone we are inclined to call an artist belongs to it” (Carroll 2007: 136). This statement could be applied to the predicament of contemporary Zambian artists in that “they are artists, but are not part of the international art world that stages biennales relentlessly and that stocks those burgeoning museums of contemporary art that are sprouting up with abandon everywhere in the urbanized art world” (Carroll 2007: 136). Carroll (2007) states that it is because of such situations that the “institution” of art itself is “transnational” and not that it is global, and thus it cannot be assumed that every artist belongs to it. He further argues “that the transnational interaction we see nowadays has been around for at least centuries if not longer . . . artworks have perennially crossed cultural and ethnic boundaries, if not as barter, then as plunder” (Carroll 2007: 136). To concur with Carroll, one particular example of early art distribution is that of King Lewanika of the Lozi (1842–1916), mentioned in Chapter 1, who “was a renowned artist whose talents included carving wood and ivory” (Milbourne 2013: 239). According to Milbourne (2013), Lewanika had an organised system of distributing his own work and that of his apprentices either by gift, sale or barter, and one recipient of his work was a French railway officer called

Alfred Bertrand and the work resides at the Musee d' ethnographie in Geneva. Melbourne (2013: 138) writes:

Bertrand received his bowl as a gift, direct from the hands of the King. The American Museum of National History acquired their bowl in 1906 from New Jersey Trader Richard Douglas, who had, in turn, purchased it as part of a contract signed by Lewanika. In other words, Lewanika likely carved and gave one bowl in a gesture of diplomacy to a Frenchman, and sold another – along with approximately four thousand items – to an American.

Notwithstanding any artistic influences from such imagery and iconography are hardly acknowledged in the genealogy of the western art canon, this is not to say that there have never been cultural exchanges and that such works as Carroll (2007:137) suggests:

Likewise, the influence of African tribal art on Picasso's invention of Cubism is widely acknowledged. But it is an outside influence on developments internal to the Western art world; no African traditions were therefore regarded as part and parcel of the story of art, or modernism, as told from the perspective of the west or the western insider. African art is not portrayed as one of the art-historical tributaries flowing into modern art. No African artist has a place in the story equivalent to Manet. That is the historians of the western tradition do not for example, track modernism as following from African art in the way in which trace Cubism as evolved from Cezanne. Though Picasso was influenced by African art, there is no African artist or even African art formation in his lineage in the way that Cezanne is. Rather, we presume that we are dealing with at least two distinct art worlds here.

According to Carroll, "Western artists exploited in order to make certain moves in the western art world", and this was done by the use of relevant aesthetic strategies that were appropriated to "short-circuit" traditional western art approaches. Thus, argues Carroll (2007: 138), "this sort of artistic exchange though transnational, is not part and parcel of a unified artworld but occurs across different art world institutions". "Alternative aesthetics" were, "manipulated rather than integrated", and "deployed for tactical advantages", he does submit however that this is changing in current times where it can be seen that "various national and regional centres of serious ambitious fine art are beginning to be fashioned into a single world – a unified, transnational institution of art" (Carroll 2007: 138). But also in line with the authors cited earlier in this chapter, he too points to the proliferation of biennales in this regard. Because these biennales assemble large numbers of artists from different geographical regions and

cultures that can “feed into the ever-expanding museum and gallery systems worldwide” (Carroll 2007: 138), this “institutional network has also constituted a readjustment in the distribution of power”, but what makes this artworld appear global are “the enhanced possibilities of communication and transportation” as “these curators provide a constant channel of information that flows from large-scale exhibition, to museums and galleries, and then back again” (Carroll 2007: 138). But this he argues is not merely a distribution network, and another thing that gives it the semblance of a “globalized” network is perhaps the language that has been developed, a view similar to that earlier mentioned by Belting and Buddensieg (2013:28) who suggested a “worldwide Koine”. The art world in the context of international biennales as it were “has developed something like its own idioms” (Carroll 2007: 138), and because of this:

. . . a common reaction that many have during a visit to quite a few biennales and other large-scale exhibitions is; where is the painting and sculpture? These shows seem to be dominated by video, film, photography, installation pieces, conceptual art and performance art (often recorded by means of some moving picture medium) (Carroll 2007: 138).

In line with technology making the world a “smaller place”, he argues that theses “idioms” and new languages of the biennales have “to an important degree” aided “this very possibility of ‘overcoming’ space – by means of these very sort of media – that instils in many the conviction that globalization is upon us” (Carroll 2007: 139). Despite this backdrop, he argues that it does not constitute a “globalized” art world as not every artist or genre belongs to it, and so it was necessary to consider it as “transnational” and not “global”.

There is still folk art, mass art, and various national traditions. But at the same time, there is this transnational institution of art that connects the artistic practice of urban centres around the world both physically and intellectually . . . Its function is not to enfranchise art; its function is to consolidate a transnational or global art world.” (Carroll 2007: 142).

Moving to the next section, I argue that the self-appointed architects of “global art” create this framing of an art world not only from a privileged standpoint but a hypothetically blind one. As Simbao suggests, “In Belting, Buddensieg and Weibel’s framing of ‘global art’ there remains a distinct direction – a direction toward the perpetuation of privilege despite attempts to be self-reflexive” (Simbao 2015: 271).

3.4 Where does Zambia lie on the international art map?

In light of the above, notions of a “global art world”, Zambia’s position in this mapping or framing will be examined here. An essay by Carol Becker can be used in this regard as it tends to put the spotlight on the decision makers of the international exhibition and biennale scene and those who have the “say-so” when it comes to mapping and labelling and deciding who belongs to what art world. This section will also briefly look at what happens to those who are left out of these international art spaces, and to which art worlds they belong. Becker (1999) writes:

What happens when artists from all over the world, now living in New York, London or other western metropolises position themselves as transnational or postnational but then are selected by curators to represent their point of origin in such contexts as biennales, to the exclusion of those who have never left? . . . Has the international art world become its own entity, its own nation, what happens to art production when the other is implicitly understood as those not part of the art world (Becker 1999: 22).

As will be soon pointed out here and as was already highlighted in the previous chapter, a few contemporary Zambian artists have adapted strategies in an effort to be included in this art world. This is not to say this ability to adapt is unique to them, as Becker (1999: 26) points out “there are many artists who now present their work as international and global, recognising that the conversation they are involved in cross national boundaries”. It can be argued however that it is not only the subject matter of the works of these Zambian artists that gained them acceptance abroad, but also the conceptual impulse they had taken on. As Carroll (2007: 138) contends, curators in international exhibitions tend to have a preference for conceptual art. As to why international curators prefer art with a conceptual impulse, it can be argued that there is an apparent pursuit towards achieving a “worldwide Koine” (Belting et al. 2013: 28) and conceptual art seems to fit adequately into this milieu. As Carroll (2007: 140) elaborates, conceptual art is a favourite because “it defies space”. However, this does not mean that “painting and sculpture have vanished from the scene”: rather his point is “that they are not the privileged art forms of the moment in the emerging transnational institutions” but more conceptual art made with the earlier mentioned media “in addition to whatever else they symbolize, embody the message of globalization . . .” (Carroll 2007: 140). Becker (1999: 26), on the other hand, also suggests that the “international art world has become a place of origination” in this regard and that it is a world “imagined into being by its curators . . . but just when it seems all this curatorial emphasis on globalism should have made the world bigger, in

fact it all seems to have gotten smaller” (Becker 1999: 26). Similarly, Simbao argues that “[w]hile curators and writers from the dominant art world might regularly visit different parts of the world, seldom do they move beyond the terms of their own art world.” (Simbao 2015: 272). Furthermore, Becker also alludes to the selective nature of who is or is not a “citizen”, and further brings into question the self-gratifying nature of the art world as perhaps a utopia that does not necessarily welcome newcomers at will. Becker (1999: 27) writes:

To whom are we as artists, writers, curators responsible when attempting to exist in relation to no one in society? If the political issues in question are global, to whom do we express concerns? . . . Some who move through such an elite world of art, culture, writing, production, and exhibition now seem to answer only to the art world. Even though the work appears to be socially motivated, the only real consequence of such critical effort is the degree to which the work is found acceptable or unacceptable by the art world: measured by the reviews it receives – the quality of the paper trail it generates and relatedly the sales it ultimately accomplishes. This phenomenon is not pleasing to artists who often do want to have an impact on society but are rendered impotent by their lack of currency in the debates around globalization.

What Becker brings out here is the immense authority that the decision makers of the art world institution possess. It can be argued that it is the well sought-after international curators in particular that are the key regulators of the art world through their jurisdiction over biennales and museums. Likewise, also in connection with Becker’s aforementioned reflection, Stallabrass (2004: 28) writes:

. . . the curators of these shows, nomadic specialists, are creatures of the global art system. They do, of course listen, consult and induct local voices, but their very *raison d’être* and the environment in which they move is global and hybrid.

According to Carroll (2007: 138): “There is without a doubt at present an interconnected, international art circuitry regulated by curators bidding nomadic artists hither and yon in search of recognition and frequent-flyer miles”. It should also be noted that, within the context of the biennales (which as evidenced here have the tendency to “propagandize” globalization, apparently the main focus of the high profile curators, whom it can be said are very proficient in theorising exhibition themes and may have studied a locale in advance before they fly in to work), what pertains on the ground as to how the locals will receive an international show may be awkward, particularly when it comes to the selection of a theme and the positioning of local artists. A case in point is the second Johannesburg Biennale where internationally acclaimed,

Nigerian-born curator Okwui Enwezor played the role of artistic director, overseeing several other international curators. While the event was “a global endeavour”, “that dealt with issues of race, colonization and migration,” local artists and critics complained that African productions were side-lined in favour of a cosmopolitan concern with global hybridity, and that they were particularly disadvantaged by the attention devoted to media art in which few local artists had expertise, or the opportunity to acquire” (Stallabrass 2004: 27). Art historian Sylvester Ogbechie (2010: 34) also problematises the role of contemporary art curators in general, asserting that they have, to a degree, overshadowed the role of the artist and art historian as participants in processes of interpretation. He argues that:

. . . whereas artists in the era of modernism claimed an avant-garde status and the authority to define the horizon of meaning for their work, contemporary curators have, by and large usurped this role and curatorial practice is increasingly seen as a form of installation for contemporary practice” (Ogbechie 2010: 34).

He also analogously relates the role of a curator, which registers well with the earlier highlighted notions of globalisation, to the realm of communication and new media. Ogbechie (2010: 34) writes:

In the information age where content aggregation is the primary mode of data management, curatorial practice reconfigures artworks as data and constitutes the curator as an extremely powerful search engine that ranks artists and artworks according to rather opaque algorithms, in the process rendering specific forms of cultural practice visible or invisible according to the self-referential autonomous logic. Much as contemporary knowledge systems value content aggregators and search engines above their constituent data, the contemporary artworld values the curator above the artist. In fact, the curator is displacing the artist to become the one who most directly benefits from the work of artistic production.

To emphasise the incongruity of the notion of the contemporary art world being one unified global entity with a level playing field for artists, it can be argued that it is the international curators themselves with their limited line of sight – despite them being “global creatures” – who appear to have shot themselves in the foot, defeating the whole purpose of assuming an all-embracing ethos because of their tendency of using a “limited number of artists recycled in close loop exhibitions” (Ogbechie 2010: 34). Nevertheless, with particular emphasis on Africa and Enwezor, whose “curatorial practice of the past decade is one of the most significant developments in the discourse of contemporary African art”, Ogbechie (2010: 34) argues that

while “Enwezor’s curatorial interventions” are supposedly meant to be “built on a notion of globalization that assumes the free flow of cultural producers . . . this notion is patently false since the global context enforces the locality of contemporary Africans with increasingly authoritarian protocols by preventing their movement across international borders”. Furthermore, as much as Enwezor has overseen a number of important exhibitions including the Venice Biennale, which he was the first African-born curator to do so in its 120-year history, “Enwezor’s curatorial focus is devoted to radical notions of contemporaneity built mainly on the practice of African artists who live and work in the west” (Ogbechie 2010: 34).

According to Ogbechi (2010: 34), these select African diaspora artists amount to an estimated 2,500 in number. It can also be argued that these numbers have recently swelled through the efforts of influential curators such as Enwezor, whose curatorial practice has been devoted to:

. . . radical notions of contemporaneity built mainly on the idea that diaspora Africans best represent the continent and that the post-colonial African exists as an autonomous subject whose cultural history is not relevant to our understanding of his or her own contemporaneity” (Ogbechie 2010: 35).

Furthermore, Enwezor’s support of African diaspora artists has had “the paradoxical result of validating a form of contemporary African art that negates critical engagement with the history and development of modern and contemporary art in Africa itself” (Ogbechi 2010: 35), and as such there are traditional forms of African art whose contemporaneity remain untheorised. Ogbechie (2010: 36) writes:

The issue is that Enwezor’s interpretation of contemporary African art renders African art redundant as a location for the unfolding of a global ethos When Enwezor, the most important curator of contemporary African art, consistently locates Africa in the diaspora, he encourages a focus on this diaspora context as the primary location of African visual culture. The effects of such dislocation ripple across a wide range of discursive practices with devastating impact. Africa is everywhere but nowhere, essentially described in the discourse as a non-location.

Taking into consideration Ogbechie’s observations and analysis of the say-so of the curator and, in particular, of Enwezor’s authority, in which lies “the concentration of power to define contemporary African art” (Ogbechie 2010: 37), in line with this research it will be relevant to see where Zambia lies. If Zambia’s position is indeed to be identified by the index of Enwezor, Simbao’s (2008a) analysis makes for an appropriate entry point. Simbao (2008a) writes:

The well-known curator Okwui Enwezor has suggested that the contemporary art scene in Zambia (in South-central Africa) is ‘developing’ or ‘emerging’. In other words, it is an art scene that does not fit neatly into the conceptual framework of so-called transnational art. A number of contemporary Zambian artists however are starting to make significant inroads on the global art scene.⁵⁴

These Zambian diaspora artists that Simbao (2008a) suggests are making significant inroads on the global art scene are Haloba and Mutelekesha, whose work has already been discussed in Chapter 2. As has been noted, these artists have adopted a conceptual strategy in order to exist and be part of the international art world and navigate their entry into it since, after all, they are coming from a “developing” art scene that rarely garners the interest of those – such as Enwezor – that have the authority to allow them in. But they have also managed to carve an acceptance in their country of origin. Speaking directly to the Zambian situation Fall (2003: 11) states:

Being known in a local art scene is quite easy to achieve in Africa. Being well known outside a country is a heavier challenge. For an African artist, exhibiting and being known in the West is not an easy road. Western artists are themselves struggling for recognition and success. The competition is high. Less than twenty African artists have been definitively integrated in the Western art market and circuits in the last decade. None of them Zambian. But exhibiting in the West for the sake of the West has no sense. There are also bad places to exhibit and dead end roads in the West. Quality of information is vital, level of ambition also. Many things happened in the past century in the history of art and today art professionals and the public are harder to please. They are looking for something different. New ideas, new concepts, something surprising and something original.

A more current example of a Zambian artist who is navigating these competitive international spaces while engaging a conceptual strategy is Stary Mwaba and, just like Haloba and Mutelekesha, he is doing it on his own terms. Mwaba attended a one-year residency in the International Studio Programme at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin from 2014 to 2015 and subsequently exhibited his work there. While he remains based in Zambia, through a considerable degree of international exposure (by way of workshops; residencies in the Caribbean, UK, and USA; and solo exhibitions in spaces such as Gallery MoMo in Johannesburg South Africa), just like Haloba and Mutelekesha he too is “deeply aware of his .

⁵⁴ Simbao’s assertion is based on a conversation with William Miko, 2005.

... relationship to the art scenes both within and beyond Zambia that are orchestrated by curators and critics” (Simbao 2008a). Locally, Mwaba is known as one of Zambia’s foremost painters of his generation, and his aesthetic is recognised as featuring a combination of representational and abstract images. Among his signature themes are portraits driven by notions of youthful anxiety, of which as a focal point often feature an adolescent boy or girl staring vacantly ahead as if lost in deep thought – for example the 2014 painting *Thinking Boxes* (Figure 43). This portrait also exemplifies many other cases where the subject would have eerie, shadowy figures lurking in the background, towering as if to personify childhood fears. A similar work, *Tree and the shepherd* (Figure 44), is again an example of his preference to portray the adolescent drifting in thought while tasked to a responsibility.

Before he left for an international artists' residency in Germany, he showed a solo exhibition entitled *Life on Mars* at the Lusaka National Museum in Zambia, and the works in this show were all paintings styled in the aforementioned manner. However, when he took the exhibition to Germany, both the size and scope of *Life on Mars* were adjusted substantially. Mwaba strategically made an addition to his mode of creative expression and accompanied his paintings with a series of large, mixed media installations. The work was made to fit within the “worldwide Koine” and the generally accepted aesthetic of contemporary art that privileges conceptual art. Featured as the only artist from the African continent in the international residency, which featured representatives from a total of 22 countries including Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada and the USA, he was arguably compelled to adapt, as all his fellow participants work primarily with video, photography, performance and installation. According to the preface of Mwaba’s exhibition catalogue, “artists are often expected to show site-specific authenticity devoid of local colour and equality to produce universally intelligible works outside the global mainstream” (Schroder 2015: 3). It is perhaps in this regard that Mwaba was further encouraged to adjust not only his usual choice of media, but also his thematic subject matter, from the instinctive topics he depicts in his paintings such as the ones earlier examined, that appeal to a ‘local’ Zambian audience, and choose topics that are not only informed by research, but also have a universal appeal that fits well into the context of international, biennale-type exhibitions. As was pointed out earlier, these exhibitions tend to privilege themes that relate to post-colonial sensitivities and, by extension, globalisation. His work in the European version of *Life on Mars* was divided into two bodies, “Afronauts” and “Chinese cabbage”. The former addresses the post-colonial encounter and muses on the future, while the latter addresses issues of globalisation vis-à-vis the free market and China’s current presence

on the African continent in areas such as agriculture, mining and construction. “Afronauts” featured paintings and installations inspired by a Zambian freedom fighter, physics teacher and hopeful space explorer, Mukuka Nkoloso. The centrepiece for these works, DKALO-15 (Figure 45), a three-dimensional mixed-media installation inspired by the prototype of a 1960s Zambian space craft, is most unusual compared to Mwaba’s earlier cited works. Nkoloso was also the founder of the “. . . National Academy of Science, Space Research and Philosophy in the 1960s. Amongst the poverty and exploitation of colonised Africa this stood out as a blinding anomaly” (Elliot 2015: 9). Nkoloso described his trainees as “Afronauts – the first Africans to conquer space” (Elliot 2015: 9), which is where Mwaba derives the name for this component of his exhibition. Analysing Nkoloso’s activities in line with Mwaba’s work, Elliot asserts that “Until recently, history has treated Nkoloso’s serious, continent-wide ambition for Zambians to be the first Africans to land on the moon or fly to Mars with a mixture of hilarity and embarrassment. Admittedly, the Academy was far from high tech” (Elliot 2015: 9). A month after Zambia’s independence a British News crew visited Zambia, interviewed Nkoloso and made a brief film about the space project and viewed Nkoloso and “his students and their training programme as little short of demented” (Elliot 2015: 9). Despite the negative tone of the short film⁵⁵, Mwaba made stills of this film, which is available on YouTube⁵⁶, and he has used them to develop some of the drawings and paintings featured in the exhibition. It can be argued that the negative attitude of the reporter in the video, which is a manifestation of the British colonial mind-set, was the driving force that inspired Mwaba to rinse Nkoloso’s project of slurs and re-tell history in a positive light using his art. Elliot (2015) picks up on this as he aptly endorses Mwaba’s effort and criticises the British news crew’s film, and singles out the interviewer as having a “complacently patronising tone”. In the film, the journalist suggests Nkoloso and his team “to most Zambians” were “just a bunch of crackpots and from what I’ve seen today I’m inclined to agree” (Elliot 2015: 9). In response to this, Nkoloso’s vision and its subsequent inspiration for Mwaba’s work, Elliot (2015:9) writes:

It was a short-sighted, dismissive description that was typical of an engrained colonial mind-set that tried to keep Africans firmly in their place, even after they had achieved independence. Nkoloso was a visionary and ironist – and perhaps a performance artist manqué – but he was also a leader who was acting out the cruel limits of colonisation,

⁵⁵ The film was made by a British ITN news team in November 1964

⁵⁶ This newsreel may be viewed on www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-9Do3dz9TR0. Also see a 30 minute September 2013, Chinese National TV (CCTV) documentary on Mukuka Nkoloso that re-assesses his significance: <http://english.cntv.cn/program/facesofafrica/20130909/100179.shtml>

and the absurdity of the position within it, by denying it had ever existed Stary Mwaba . . . has resurrected Nkoloso as an emblem of a specifically African expression of creativity, angst, modernity, absurdity and desire. Here, Nkoloso's Academy becomes a critical and heroic act in the face of impossible odds, an absurd dream enacted by a man who doggedly refused to accept the deficit of creativity and hope that his time, location, skin colour and social status had conspired to ordain for him.

German art critic Kito Nedo also broadens the theoretical concerns of Nkoloso's space programme and by extension Mwaba's work. Nedo (2015: 83), declares that Nkoloso is also "the father of Afrofuturism", a cultural and aesthetic movement inspired by science fiction which is generally accepted as having its roots in North America. He writes:

What does that past Afrofuturism spirit of departure mean to Zambia today? [Mwaba] is also interested in the aesthetic-political content of the Nkoloso programme: its assertion of African space travel conjures a powerful counter-image to the dominant colonial narrative, which sees Africa merely as a backward, chaotic, low-tech part of the world. Mwaba prefers the science-fiction story as a starting point for his art, putting the cold clarity of space into action against those warm clay tones that so often feature, locking our eyes to their surface, in contemporary African art (Nedo 2015: 83-84).

Nevertheless, it can also be argued that Mwaba is using *Life on Mars* and Nkoloso's above mentioned predicament as a metaphor for life in Zambia to interpret his own situation of practising contemporary art in a marginalised setting (as indicated by Elliot) and that "in paintings, installations, sculptures and objects", he "has investigated and questioned the absurdity of the world in which he grew up. Confronted by a spectre of *Life on Mars*, he has tried to understand what made it this way, as well as his place in it, both at home and abroad." (Elliot 2015: 11).

I have used Mwaba's work to argue that Zambian artists can, indeed, do things on their own terms and in their own way by producing conceptual art not necessarily because it is deemed fashionable by the West, but because he and other artists can use a conceptual impulse to assert a revised projection of 'Africa'. I also submit that Zambian artists can be observed as individuals who are finally assuming their own agency because, as has been revealed in the previous chapters, despite Zambia gaining independence and being assigned the label of a "developing country", there still remained very little room or a system that allowed for artistic development on their own terms, and that "where they existed, the arts were traditional and local, and when they were produced for sale it was in the form of imagery that 'looked African'

to cater for the taste of a small market of expats and the odd tourist” (Hartley 2015). However, against this backdrop that is espoused by the lack of formal art education institutions, Mwaba has been “trained” within the workshop system. While it can be said that it is within this system that he may have learned early, in the formative stages of his career, how to appeal to international curators’ preferences through mingling with artists from other countries who had already experienced a significant amount of international exposure it is evident that he did not just mimic the popular video and sound installations he was exposed to. In 1999, Mwaba participated in the Mbile international artists workshop (see Chapter 1) in Siavonga, Zambia and “in making international contacts, particularly those extending from the Mbile workshop to Lamu and Trinidad, the example and help of the Triangle Art Network was a great support and Mwaba credits this as having played a pivotal role in his early development” (Elliot 2015: 15). The development would in turn lead to his participation in international artists’ workshops outside Zambia that took place in Lamu, Kenya (2004); Oxfordshire, UK (2005); Long Island, USA (2005/2010); Port of Spain Trinidad (2006); Gaborone, Botswana (2007); and Accra, Ghana (2013), in the last of which he would make contacts with the likes of Nigeria-based international curator Bisi Silva and open the opportunity for his latest excursion, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2014/2015).

Mwaba’s participation in exhibitions such as the last holds him in good stead for future shows of a similar nature, as his work was also adequately documented in catalogues and magazines that will find themselves in the hands of local and international curators. I emphasise again the critical importance of documentation, drawing once more from Fall, who speaks directly to the Zambian situation and states: “if there is no catalogue, art journalist or critique that will report to the public, one can wonder which impact these ‘events’ have on the artistic career of someone eager to be acknowledged and to move forward” (Fall 2003: 7). I argue that, as an example, Mwaba has shown that a Zambian or an African artist can, indeed, persuade and enable a western-dominated global audience to see an alternative glimpse of art from Africa, and to engage seriously with contemporary work that is informed by overlooked histories. Simbao (2016: 5) aptly lays this out, suggesting that:

The artworld has, on many occasions, represented ‘Africa’ in an outmoded way – as static, shallow and singular despite the multifarious complexities of the continent. In a contemporary context of economic neoliberalism, it is critical to keep dialogue as open as possible when talking about art and the African continent, and to constantly

question whether 'Africa' is being used as a facile marketing tool. Artists associated with the African continent produce a vast array of work that is complex, questioning and open-ended, often deliberately resisting the consumption of their work as 'African'. Consequently, as we contemplate tomorrow's today in relation to art and the continent of Africa (particularly in the context of a commercial art fair), it is imperative to be attuned to the diverse ideas that are consuming artists today.

Mwaba counters this problematic narrative of representing Africa in an outmoded way by bringing into a contemporary context "forgotten" archival material that demonstrates that, as eccentric as it may sound, an African country was in its own way involved in the 1960s space race alongside world giants, the United States and the Soviet Union. Although Mwaba does appear to assert his own agency here in terms of choosing a forgotten narrative and navigating fraught local and global art spheres, I do not triumphantly imply that he or other Zambian artists have solved the problems that continue to face African artists and artists in other parts of the global south who continue to struggle against Western biases in a supposedly art world. For artists such as Haloba, Mutelekesha and Mwaba the ongoing tensions and struggles that they face, demonstrate that 'global art' is not just a blissful free-for-all utopia, as it continues to privilege certain things and erase other things. Throughout this thesis I have pointed to these struggles and have begun the process of highlighting and analysing that which tends to be overlooked and erased.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have argued that in the pre-independence period, Zambia art was significantly influenced by foreign supervision, both in its aesthetic tradition (19th century representational manner of sculptures or paintings produced with the use of easels (Hartley 2014)) and in the art scene's general patronage (with gallery owners and art collectors being mainly of Euro-American origin). While these patrons played an important role in the development of art in Zambia to some degree, they also problematically laid the foundation for ways in which 'African art' or 'Zambian art' was expected to be framed, shaped and understood. During this period, indigenous Zambians were restricted to handicrafts as an art form, a situation that was further encouraged and fully supported by the post-independent government, which intended to grow the genre and use it as an instrument of nationalism. (This was short-lived due to a shift of priorities in the late 1960s and early 1970s).

Government however did continue to sponsor the efforts of the Lusaka Art Society (LAS), which had later assumed the name of Art Centre Foundation (ACF). It was the transition of LAS into ACF under the administration of Cynthia Zukas and Bente Lorenz that saw the integration of local artists such as Henry Tayali and Tubayi Dube into the organisation, and by extension into the greater contemporary Zambian art network. It is evident that as Kirumira and Kasfir point out that "It is worth observing that several types of workshops [...] have existed in Africa for some time; many were begun by colonial patrons" (Kirumira, Kasfir 2013:11). This can also be said of Zambia, although the patrons cited here were not colonial per se and may perhaps be called post-colonial, they were vestiges of colonialism, apart from Lorenz's ceramics and sculpture workshop, the ACF which had its roots in colonialism helped establish the Evelyn Hone college art workshops in Lusaka. Through the ACF, the workshops at Evelyn Hone College in the early 1970s became an important meeting place for local and expatriate artists, or black and white artists as it were. It is at these workshops that Witkamp would play an integral role in the development of contemporary art in Zambia creating his own clique of local artists adopting the media of "drawing, painting, graphics (dry point and lino cut), murals (painting and mosaic), and batik stamp design" (Witkamp 2011)

Nonetheless, at this point indigenous Zambians may have only been slightly beginning to assert their own agency as artists although Tayali here was among the first serious contemporary Zambian artist who would later become a key figure and driving force in helping develop a

creative dialect of art by shifting the emphasis in the subject matter from a representational one to a more abstract and politically-informed one.

While Tayali's endeavours and sensitivities as a painter are well documented and analysed in the research of Setti (2000) and Mumba (2015), my research has managed, in a modest way, to tease out Tayali's efforts – albeit frustrated endeavours – as a scholar who struggled to assert his agency and free contemporary Zambian art practice from its acquired artisanal characteristics, and link it to academia by introducing a series of scholarly lectures and attempting to convince the University of Zambia to create a fine art department (Rogers 1988). In light of the aforesaid, this research also declares that Tayali is Zambia's first scholar of the visual arts. His unpublished works and the theories -- which can possibly accessed at the university of Zambia -- he was developing at this point remain a matter for investigation on which future research can be developed by prospective scholars. This will be a significant addition to a broader revisionist project, in which the scholarly discourse on contemporary African art is expand to include scholars who have remained rooted on the African continent. Key among these theories was a concept that would counter notions implying that only regions which have experienced brutal conflict possess an essential ingredient to inspire a creative direction (Rogers 1988).

Between the late 1970s and the late 1990s, Mpapa Gallery, founded by Joan Jenkins, emerged as the country's only commercial gallery; it attempted to establish a western-style system of display and distribution, with much success considering the economic difficulties the country was experiencing at the time as well as the limited market of mainly foreign diplomats who were the main patrons as earlier indicated. As I have demonstrated in Chapter One, it is under the stewardship of expatriate art teacher and practising artist Ruth Hartley that the gallery reached the peak of its success. Hartley's efforts not only saw an increase in exhibitions and a demand for higher standards from the artists exhibiting in the gallery, but they also enabled Zambia's participation in events such as the Havana Biennial 1987 and subsequently the introduction of a contemporary art workshop system as a means of training through Mbile in 1993, the first of many workshops that preceded the Insaka International Artists Workshops, still operational today. Even so, I have found it increasingly difficult after analysing my research data to acknowledge that local Zambians were given enough room to assert their own agency in terms of their own knowledge production as artists even at the peak of Mpapa Gallery's success.

I argue that with the entrance of artists such as Martin Phiri, the pioneer of conceptual art in Zambia on the scene in the late 1980s, Zambians can be seen, perhaps not entirely for the first time, but certainly on a stronger note to reject the notion that artists are supposed to create certain types of work in order to satisfy a specific clientele. Based on my findings, I argue that one of the unfortunate results of Euro-American dominance during the colonial period and beyond is that Zambians at this time were understandably weary of Euro-American or 'foreign' influence and some artists therefore reject conceptual art as merely being a 'foreign' and 'un-African' influence. As someone who has been observing and writing about the Zambian art scene as an arts journalist for over a decade, I too have been wary not only of contemporary Zambian art with a conceptual attitude, but also of conceptual art in general. During the course of my Masters research at Rhodes University, I was privileged to examine several texts on conceptual art which have since enlightened me and changed my standpoint altogether.

Nonetheless, some Zambian artists have embraced conceptualism, but are also painfully aware of the need to navigate two worlds that at times appear to be in tension -- that is, the world of international curators and viewers who place high value on conceptual art and the world of local viewers who often tend to shun conceptual art. Anwana Holaba and Mutale Kalinosi's *Konse Kabili*, among additional exhibitions and works by other Zambian artists listed in this thesis bear testimony to this. Analysing these artists also suggests that the conceptual impulse is not entirely a Euro-American impulse, but, that said, that does not mean that we are now in a situation in which we can all sit back and say 'all is equal' and we live in a 'global' art world in which everyone has an equal say. While there is a current tendency for proponents of 'global art' to be idealistic about globalisation as there is, as they suggest, a rise in 'new art worlds', there is still the need for the Euro-American art world to more actively acknowledge their role in dominance in shaping the so-called international art world, and in offering the freedom for Africans to assert their own agency in terms of what they produce and how they produce it as artists.

This study has shown that Zambians can, indeed, engage successfully in conceptual art without merely mimicking Euro-American art, and I have demonstrated in Chapter Two that conceptualism is not entirely the domain of the West in any case. Furthermore, Zambian artists are starting to produce work on their own terms, such as Stary Mwaba whom I have used as a case study in Chapter Three. I argue that Mwaba demonstrates that Zambian artists are not simply following trends, but are in many ways producing work on their terms and in their own way, and as a local Zambian working with these artists, I play a role in shaping the discourse

around 'global art' from a local perspective. As I argue throughout this thesis this agency is critical, as I reject the notion that international curators and writers can dominate the shaping of the current art scene by in effect pretending that all is now equal, when actually it is not. It is critical to look at local contexts in the broader framework of 'global art' and why 'global art' needs to retain a dialogical relationship between the 'global' and 'local'.

Nevertheless, concerning Zambia specifically, as Witkamp (2015) points out, the story of contemporary art in Zambia is in “bits and pieces scattered in various places” and that:

[a]s time goes on it becomes harder to piece these historical fragments together and bring them to life by personal accounts of those who created modern art in Zambia; the pioneers of what has become a substantial tradition embodying its unique brand of contemporary African art (Witkamp 2015).

For my part, this thesis is a humble contribution that seeks to address this dilemma and participate in the documentation that through neglect has obscured the art scene. As can be observed, this thesis excludes a number of key players, artists and administrators who may have also played critical roles in the development of art in Zambia. Consequently, it leaves room for further scholarship vis-à-vis arguments, corrections, additions and a continued retelling of the history of contemporary art in Zambia.

APPENDIX A: CONTEMPORARY ZAMBIAN ARTISTS' UNDERSTANDING OF CONCEPTUALISM, ARTISTS RESPONSES

“A work that is done because the idea is the most important thing.” (Agnes Buya Yombwe – Multimedia)

“Isn't a concept an idea? As artists we have ways of putting ideas across.” (Chishimba Chansa – Multimedia)

“Conceptual art is just artists brainstorming.” (Samuel Manduli – Painter)

“Conceptual art is big in Europe, it is made to publicise specific things, maybe AIDS, or poverty, by using anything that will stimulate people with ideas, maybe it's not even something you can put in the house, it can be developed as a project.” (Vincent Maonde – Painter)

“I will define it as the idea behind the artwork, in conceptual art the actual art work is not as important as the idea itself, because I can make a work out of anything.” (Tom Phiri – Sculptor)

“Conceptual art means modern art, that's how I understand it, the kind of art that is being produced now. This is when you talk about things like installation, it has come with a bang, almost everyone wants to do it, if you want to go for a residency for example if you put a conceptual work on your slides you stand a better chance.” (Adrian Ngoma – Painter)

“Conceptual art is produced or based on the idea that you have, in this context the idea becomes much more important than the outcome, the outcome can be nonsensical, this is a situation where a fully-fledged artist could even make a painting that looks childlike, for me that's conceptual art.” (Andrew Katembula – Painter, Art History Lecturer Evelyn Hone College, Lusaka, Zambia)

“Conceptual art is maybe, you think about it, ponder about it, that's when you bring it out, I think it's more intellectual.” (Angela Ninda Soko – Painter, Sculptor, Schoolteacher)

“It's just a concept, not really an artwork that will stay for a long time, it is something that will be created for a specific event maybe a workshop, then later on the whole concept is explained or performed and then after the whole show its brought down never to be seen again apart from visual recording or video recording.” (Bisa Phiri – Sculptor)

“It's an idea, or art that you present – art ideas. It evokes the ideas, just one work will speak about many things, I think, like the lady that put salt on a table and licked a map out of it, and she went as far as the Venice Biennale.” (Branislav Kambwili – Sculptor)

“Conceptual art is the art where you don't really mind how it looks but the most important thing is the concept, for example you can get a stone and mount another one on top of it and call it 'oppressed' what

you are trying to say is the stone on top is putting pressure on the one at the bottom. To a lay man it won't make sense of course.” (Charles Chambata – Sculptor)

“It works with ideas and doesn't have to be pleasing to the sight or smell, but a concept that someone has and wants to pass on, they can use anything, it can be permanently installed or there just for a few minutes. It can even be a performance of which actually if you look at Africans we are naturally gifted in that we perform, we live our lives performing. If you come to Africa, asking people what is art, nobody is going to define it because art is just them, we are art.” (David Daut Makala – Painter)

“It's art that promotes the concept, they don't look at the finished product, it's how you arrive at something, and there is more thinking involved.” (Lombe Nsama – Painter, Schoolteacher)

“The idea takes precedence over the execution, and right now it is quite big. But I'm a big follower of 'traditional' art, but that is 90% I leave 10% for whatever can come in to inspire me in any way. I'm more inclined to traditional forms of art.” (Mwamba Mulangala – Painter, Schoolteacher)

“To conceptualize is to compose.” (Mwepu Kabungwe – Multimedia)

“It's the idea, not the making, conceptual art can be anything, it's the idea.” (Nezias Nyirenda – sculptor)

“I think it is a kind of art where you go into the depth of thinking and create something where you can use any form of material and create something of meaning.” (Raphael Chilufya – Painter)

“In simple terms it has to do a lot with the concept rather than the material or medium, the concept is the most important thing and everything else comes second.” (Stary Mwaba – Painter)

“I'm not familiar with a lot of art terminologies, they are not clear I haven't paid much attention to reading, I think even other Zambian artists too, some of these words are like tongues.” (Montfort Chinunda – Painter)

“It's derived from experimenting with effects on viewers, where the artists themselves try to become the art, with conceptual art its always the element of surprise that is hidden in the way the art comes out.” (Mufiti Mushoke – Painter)

“I have been arguing with myself, but I think it is what people are calling new art, not paintings or sculpture, I come up with an installation, or sound, movement, and call it conceptual art, but for me every art piece is conceptual if it is a new idea it's a new study. Because it is an idea which wasn't there, it being a painting, sculpture, illustration, or performance, as long as it's an original idea, in my books it qualifies.” (Mulenga Mulenga – Painter)

“To me it borders on issues of abstract relaying an idea, you are pushing an idea, its idea based, usually it's the guys coming from Europe . . . like Lawrence Chikwa.” (Chipika Simanwe – Painter)

“It hangs around ideas, things that can get to be used by the artist, a lot of people may not make sense as long as it brings out the idea and sells a certain message.” (Sydney Siansangu – Sculptor)

‘It’s trying to come up with an idea, using any media, something that will just give a feeling to the people, maybe you are trying to change the way people think by arranging things in a certain way.’
(Timothy Mambwe – Painter)

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ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1 T. Baines, *The Falls from the West* (1862), oil on canvas, National Archives of Zimbabwe. (published in Carruthers and Arnold, (1995).



Fig. 2 E. Holub, *Matoka Chief Saka Sipa* (undated), illustration, (published in Ellison, G. *Art in Zambia* (2004). (6/10/15).



Fig. 3 (left) A. Cree, (right) DB Willson *Rhodesia Regiment* (undated), illustrations, (published in Ellison, G. *Art in Zambia* (2004). (6/10/15).



Fig. 4 H. Tayali *Destiny* (1960–1965), oil on canvas. (published in Lechwe Trust Catalogue (2009)).



Fig. 5 An undated photograph showing Henry Tayali sketching a live scene from a crafts market in Lusaka. (Reproduction from Visual Arts Council of Zambia documentation centre). (6/10/15).

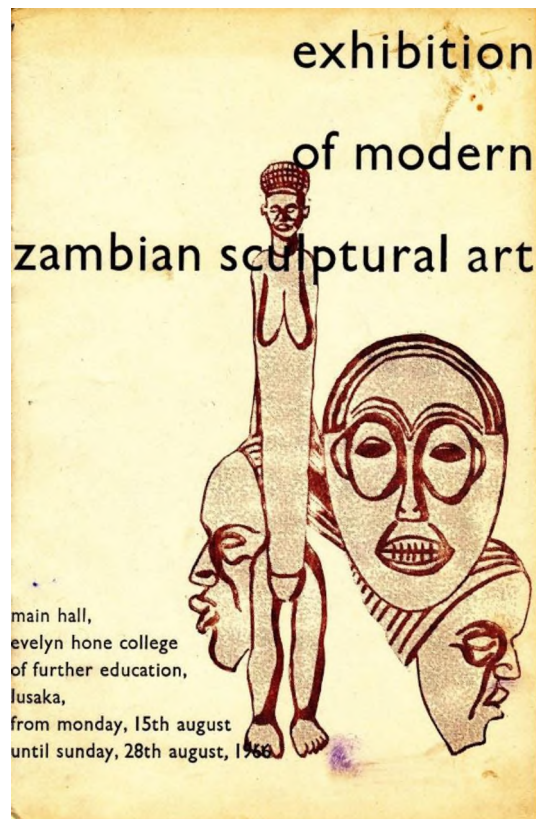


Fig. 6 Catalogue cover from the 1966 exhibition held at Evelyn Hone College in Lusaka.
(Reproduction 6/10/15).



Fig. 7 R. Sililo, wood carving, undated. (published in Ellison G., *Art in Zambia* (2004). (6/10/15).



Fig. 8 Catalogue cover from the 1966 exhibition held at the Adler Fielding Gallery in Johannesburg. (Reproduction 6/10/15)



Fig. 9. A Johannesburg model, Colleen Andrews, studies some of the many Zambian sculptures which have been flown to Johannesburg for exhibition at the Adler Fielding Gallery
(published in *Sunday Times*, South Africa issue dated 23/10/66.)



Fig. 10. R.B. Hartley *Chikumbi Bombings*, 1979, oil on canvas, 102cm x76cm, National Collection, Lusaka (Reproduction from Lusaka National Museum, Zambia)



Fig. 11. R. Mutt, *Fountain*, (1917), Photograph by Alfred. (Reproduction taken from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcel_Duchamp#/media/File:Duchamp_Fountain.jpg. Accessed: 02/10/15)



Fig. 12. Gavin Turk, *Cavey*, (1991 – 1997), Ceramic. (Reproduction taken from <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turk-cavey-t13208>. Accessed: 02/10/15)



Fig. 13 Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs* (1965). (published in Godfrey, T. 1998. *Conceptual Art*. Phaidon Press Limited Accessed: 02/10/15)



Fig. 14. Martin Phiri, *Casket II* (1995 – 1996) on display at the Henry Tayali Gallery in Lusaka, Zambia (Reproduction supplied by William B. Miko, 2015)



Fig. 15. Martin Phiri, detail of *Casket II* (1995 – 1996) by Martin Phiri (Reproduction supplied by William B. Miko, 2015)



Fig. 16. Martin Phiri, earlier works, *Nude Study I* (1980s) and *Nude Study 2*, charcoal on paper (published in Lechwe Trust Collection catalogue. 02/10/15)



Fig. 17. Martin Phiri, *Tukababwino Kuntanshi*, grey marble, (1990s) and *Accordion Player*, scrap metal (1990s), (published in Lechwe Trust Collection catalogue. 02/10/15)



Fig. 18. Anawana Haloba, Salt-lick performance (1999). (Reproduction by Ruth Simbao published in *Art South Africa*, Autumn, 2007. 05/10/15)



Fig. 19 Anawana Haloba, from Street intervention in Lusaka, Zambia. (Reproduction by Ruth Kerkham Simbao published in *Art South Africa*, Autumn, 2007. 05/10/15)



Fig. 20. Kalinosi Mutale, *Lucifer*, 2004. (Photo: Ruth Kerkham, published in *Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art*, Autumn 2007 Edition. 05/10/15)



Fig. 21 (left) Norman O'Flynn and Lutanda Mwamba, from an untitled performance (2003). (published in *Insaka International Artists Workshop 2003 booklet*. 02/10/15)

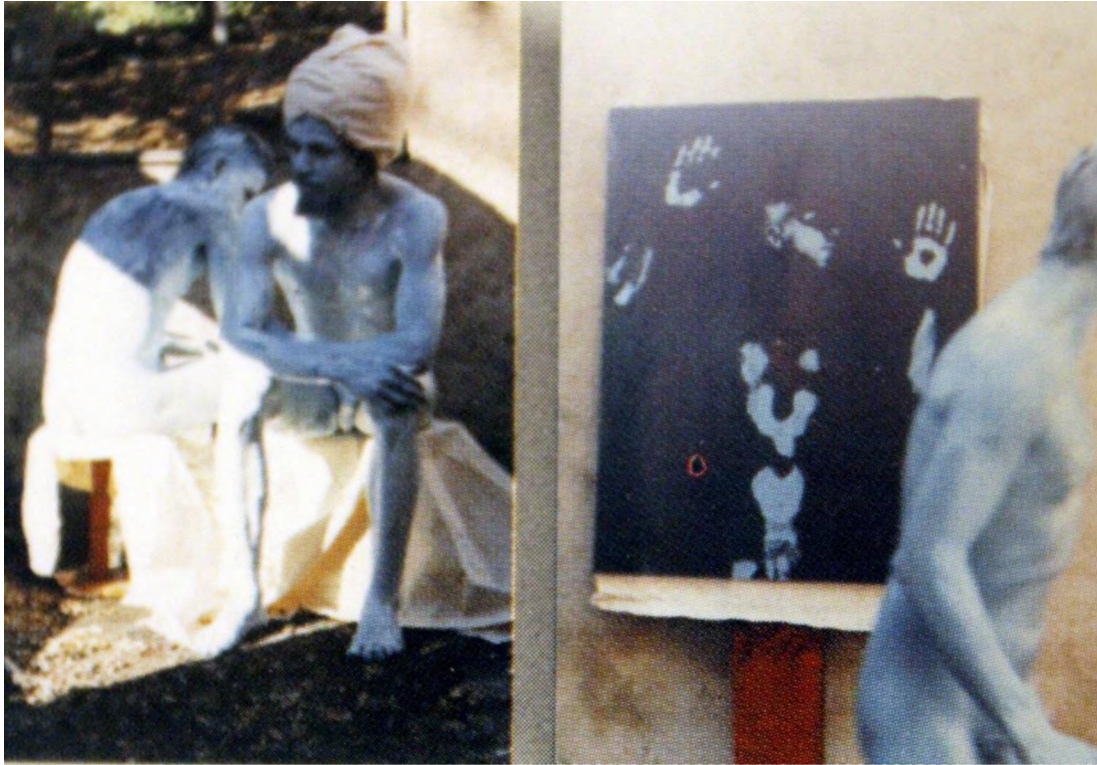


Fig. 22 Norman O'Flynn and Lutanda Mwamba, from *Body paint performance* (2003)
(published in *Insaka* International Artists Workshop 2003 catalogue. 02/10/15)



Fig. 23 Norman O'Flynn and Lutanda Mwamba, from *Body paint performance* (2003)
(published in *Insaka* International Artists Workshop 2003 catalogue. 02/10/15)



Fig. 24 Zenzele Chulu and Lutanda Mwamba, from *Nyami Nyami Lunch* (2003),
(published in *Insaka International Artists Workshop 2003 catalogue*. 02/10/15)



Fig. 25 Zenzele Chulu, from *Cross Border* (2003). (published in *Insaka International Artists Workshop 2003 catalogue*.
02/10/15)



Fig. 26 Sylvia Mwando, from *Initiation Performance* (2003). (published in *Insaka* International Artists Workshop 2003 catalogue. 02/10/15)



Fig. 27 David Chirwa, (from left to right) *Struggling Performance*, 1997, horn and marble, *Recurring Dream*, 1995 stone and wood, *Fertility Concept*, 1994 horn and marble (published in *Transitions* exhibition catalogue)



Fig. 28 David Chirwa, *Third World Illusion*, detail. (2004) Installation, mixed media (published in *Transitions* Exhibition Catalogue. 03/10/15)



Fig. 29 David Chirwa, *Third World Illusion*, detail. (2004) Installation, mixed media (published in *Transitions* Exhibition Catalogue. 03/10/15)



Fig. 30 Baba Jakeh Chande, *Torso*, and *Endangered Species* (Reproduction taken from photograph by Alice Cunningham).
03/10/15)

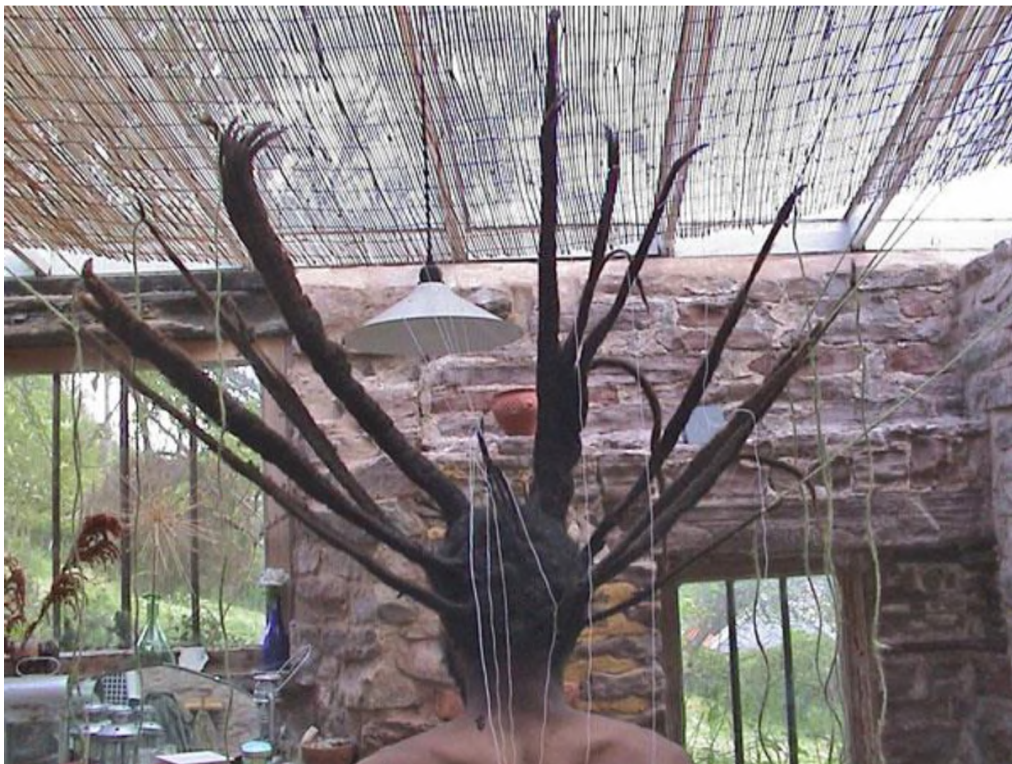


Fig. 31 Baba Jakeh Chande, from *Celebration*, (published on <http://www.keketop.com/chande/>. 03/10/15)



Fig. 32 Baba Jakeh Chande, *Awaiting Revelation* – performance in mutton cloth. (Reproduction taken from photograph, Zambia Visual Arts Council archives. January 2015)



Fig. 33. Baba Jakeh Chande, in a performance. (published in <http://africasacountry.com/2011/05/finlands-africa/>)



Fig. 34. Baba Jakeh Chande, in a performance. (published on 03/10/15 from <http://www.palsfestival.se/fake-finns-and-wannabe-swedes/artists>)



Fig. 35. Victor Mutelekesha, 2000 from performance in Chipata, Zambia. (Reproduction made available by William Miko, 5/10 /15)



Fig. 36. Victor Mutelekesha, *Dagali Meltdown*, 2008 mixed media installation, sound, video, photographs. (published in *Weekend Post*, Friday January 11 2008. 06/10/15)

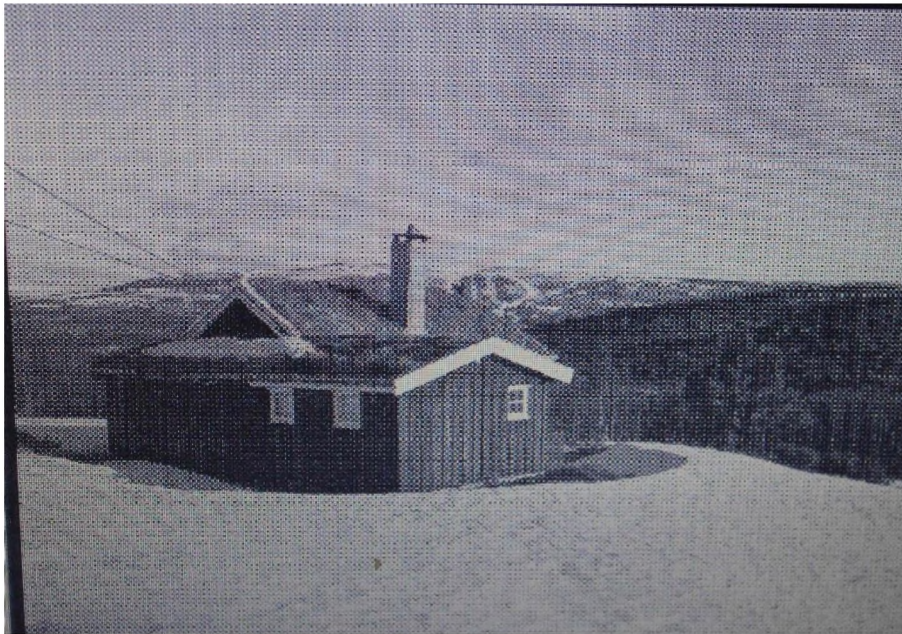


Fig. 37. Victor Mutelekesha, *Dagali Meltdown*, 2008 mixed media installation, sound, video, photographs. (published in *Weekend Post*, Friday January 11 2008. 06/10/15)



Fig. 38. Kate Naluyele, *Simple Living*, painting on canvas, 57x74. (published in *Zambian Female Artists' Exhibition in Norway 1999* exhibition catalogue. 05/10/15)

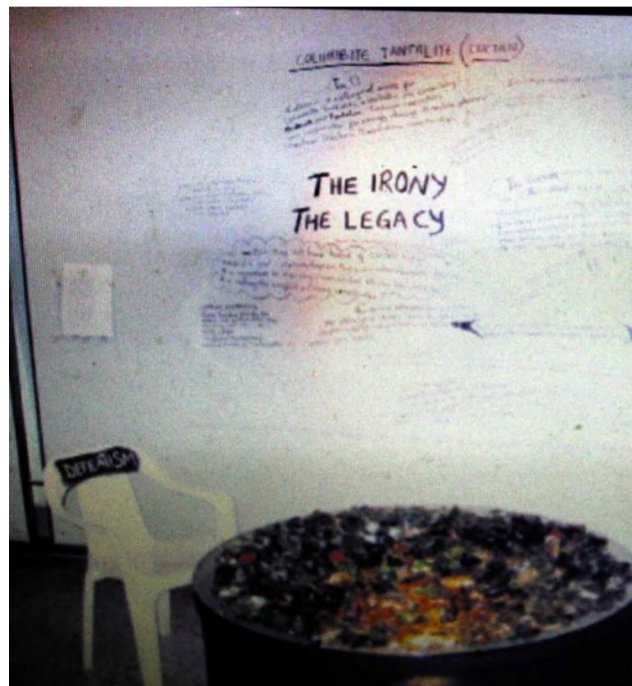


Fig. 39. Kate Naluyele, *Defeatism*, 2007 mixed media installation. (published in *Weekend Post*, Friday August 10 2007. 05/10/15)



Fig. 40. Chanda Mwenya, *Viewer Discretion*, 2007 installation with ready-mades. (published in *Weekend Post*, Friday January 2 2008. 05/10/15)



Fig. 41 Danny Chiliapa Lwando, *Mr Speaker*, 2015 mixed media installation, found objects. (published in *Saturday Post*, Saturday May 30 2015. 06/10/15).



Fig. 42 Mutale Kalinosi and Joseph Shakulipa, *Ship on The Mediterranean*, 2015 mixed media installation. (published in *Saturday Post*, Saturday May 30 2015. 06/10/15).



Fig. 43. Stary Mwaba, *Thinking Boxes*, 2014, acrylic on canvas (Courtesy of the artist 01/18/16).



Fig. 44. Sary Mwaba, *The Tree and Shepherd*, 2014, acrylic on canvas (Courtesy of the artist 01/18/16)



Fig. 45. Sary Mwaba *DKALO-15*, 2014, mixed media 235 x 120 x 120 cm (published in Sary Mwaba – Life on Mars 2015. 19/01/16)



Fig. 45. Stary Mwaba Copper, *Cobalt and Manganese Cabbage*, 2014, mixed media 235 x 120 x 120 cm (published in Stary Mwaba – Life on Mars 2015. 19/01/16)